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Bonus section:
15 thanksgiving
side dishes

how to roast a moist turkey

**making a rich
pan gravy**

**adding new
flavor to four
fall vegetables**

**baking an
apple crumb
pie or crisp**

**roasting
chicken for
a casual
harvest menu**

**creating a
quick thai soup**



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16 fresh or thawed jumbo prawns or shrimp
1 can (8 oz.) pineapple chunks
1/2 cup Kikkoman Quick & Easy Marinade™,
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Honey & Mustard or Gourmet Teriyaki
1 small red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch squares
4 (12-inch) metal or bamboo skewers

Leaving tails intact, peel prawns; devein. Reserving 2 Tbsp. juice,* drain pineapple. Blend juice and marinade in large bowl; remove 1/4 cup mixture. Add prawns to bowl. Toss to coat well; remove. Place 1 pineapple chunk in curve of each prawn; thread alternately with red pepper onto skewers, leaving space between pieces. Broil 4 inches from heat source 4 minutes. Turn over; brush with removed sauce mixture. Cook 3 to 4 minutes longer, or until prawns turn evenly pink.

*If using Roasted Garlic & Herbs, reserve 1/4 cup pineapple juice. TIP: Soak bamboo skewers in water 30 minutes to prevent burning.

WINTER WHITE BEAN SOUP

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

1/2 pound dry great Northern beans, rinsed
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 carrots, diced
1 large onion, chopped
1 can (14 oz.) vegetable broth
1 bay leaf
1/2 cup Kikkoman Roasted Garlic Teriyaki
Marinade & Sauce
1/2 pound mustard greens or kale

Soak beans in 2 quarts cold water, covered, overnight; drain. Saute carrots and onions in hot oil in Dutch oven or large saucepan over high heat 3 minutes, or until onion is translucent. Stir in next 3 ingredients, beans and 4 cups water; cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer 45 minutes. Meanwhile, discard stems and center ribs from greens; cut leaves into 2-inch pieces. Stir greens into soup. Cook, covered, 25 minutes longer, or until beans are tender. Discard bay leaf. Serve hot.

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OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2004 ISSUE 67

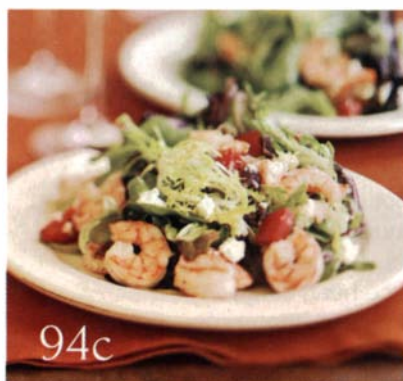
RECIPE FOLDOUTS

- 10E** Thanksgiving on the Side
Fifteen great recipes for dressings, green beans, potatoes, gratins, and cranberry sauce



10e

- 94C** Quick & Delicious



94c

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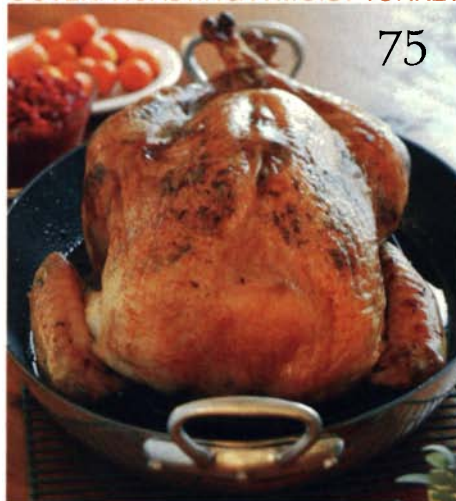
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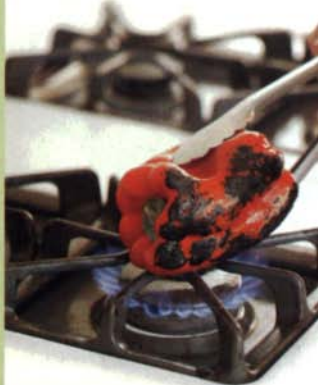
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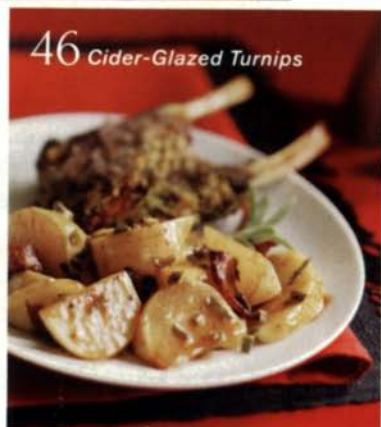
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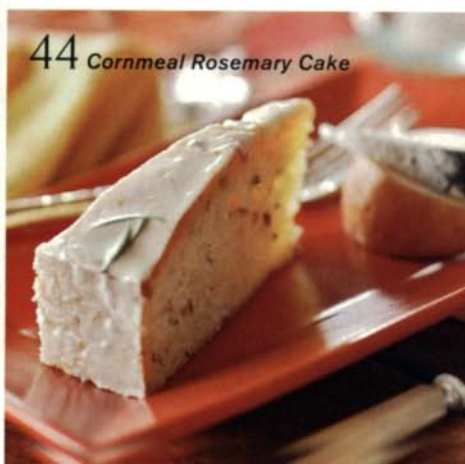
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Brined Roast Turkey with Sage Butter Rub, 75

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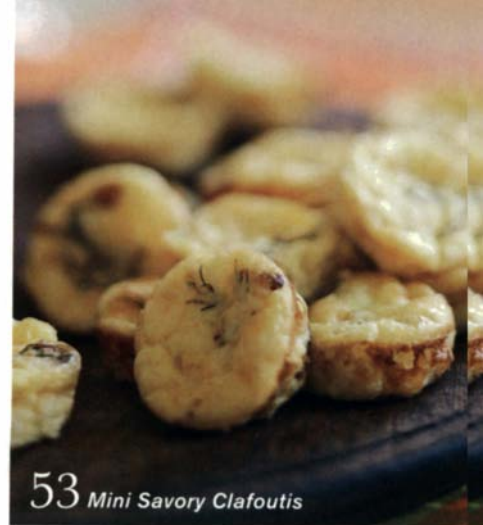
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While growing up, **Joanne McAllister Smart** always helped pull together Thanksgiving dinners for her family. "My mother, a nurse, often worked on Thanksgiving, so my dad and the four of us kids would cook the entire meal," she says. Joanne rose enthusiastically to the task of gathering her favorite *Fine Cooking* side dishes for "Thanksgiving on the Side" (p. 10E). A former *Fine Cooking* editor, Joanne is the co-author of the award-winning *Bistro Cooking at Home* with Boston chef Gordon Hamersley. She's at work on an Italian cookbook with New York chef Scott Conant, which will be published in the fall of 2005.

Eva Katz ("Fall Vegetables," p. 45) has worked in almost every aspect of the food industry, as a chef, caterer, teacher, recipe developer and tester, food stylist, and food writer. She was the director of the test kitchen for *Cook's Illustrated* and has contributed to numerous cookbooks. After cooking professionally in Australia and aboard private yachts in the Mediterranean and Caribbean, Eva now lives and cooks in Massachusetts, where she is also on the advisory board of the Cambridge School of Culinary Arts.

Randall Price ("Crustless Quiche," p. 50) was working as a chef in Ohio years ago when he entered a recipe contest, won a pastry course at La Varenne in Paris, and from there launched a career in Europe as a caterer, chef, and teacher, including several years as chef to the Austrian and

Seattle chef **Tom Douglas** ("A Seattle Chef's Relaxed Menu," p. 38) is credited with putting Pacific Northwest cuisine on the American culinary map. And he has won every accolade a chef could hope for. But what this warm-hearted culinary genius really lives for are big casual dinners at home with family and friends. Tom's entertaining menu features no-nonsense recipes with big flavor and flair, as well as down-to-earth kitchen advice: "The trick is to get organized. Do as much prep in advance as possible and, by all means, keep things simple." Tom's books include *Tom Douglas' Seattle Kitchen* and *Tom's Big Dinners*.



Nancie McDermott



Eva Katz



Randall Price

Australian ambassadors to France and to the U.S. ambassador to Hungary, and as chef at the U.S. embassy in Paris. He was also chef at the Café de Mars in Paris and was host of Europe's Classic Inns on the Travel Channel, sampling the best in all good things for food-loving travelers. These days, Randall is the resident chef at La Varenne's Château du Fey and cooks for private clients in Paris and the Auvergne.

Amy Albert ("Ranges," p. 68, and "The Winning Recipes," p. 54) is *Fine Cooking's* senior editor. Between researching and writing about the best in 30-inch ranges and covering the America's Best Home Cook competition (both words and images) for this issue, she has logged in a lot of road time lately. "I was especially tickled to meet and photograph the contest finalists," she says. "Every one of them was lovely—and every bit as cool and calm as the most experienced pros I've worked alongside."

Nancie McDermott ("Thai Chicken Soup," p. 60) is a food writer and cooking teacher who specializes in the cuisines of Southeast Asia. She fell in love with Thai food when she spent three years in rural Thailand as a Peace Corps volunteer. She now lives with her family in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where, just like in Thailand, all the iced tea is sweet and food is almost always the main event. Nancie's cookbooks include *Real Thai*, *Real Vegetarian Thai*, and, most recently, *Quick & Easy Thai: 70 Everyday Recipes*.

After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America, **Wendy Kalen** ("Apple Desserts," p. 62) went on to cook and bake in Boston restaurants before finding her way to a career as a recipe developer. Wendy loves baking with many types of apples, but for eating out of hand, her favorite is a new variety called Honeycrisp: "It's a fabulous apple, so juicy and crisp and sweet—true to its name."

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Delicious Dinners, for Thanksgiving & Beyond

Thanksgiving is the mother of all meals at this time of year—arguably of the whole year—and like the rest of us, you'll need a delicious, crowd pleaser of a lineup. We've created one that can't miss, complete with easy wine pairing choices which include options for a range of tastes and preferences. So if you're having a crowd, why not set out a selection of wine and let your dinner guests pick and choose? And speaking of options, you can customize your side dishes by choosing from 15 recipes in our special section at right.

Love Thanksgiving though we do, the truth is that you still need to eat dinner, enjoy a glass of wine, and entertain on lots of other nights, too. Check out Tom Douglas's great late-summer harvest menu on p. 38 for a relaxed dinner with friends. And on p. 12 are menu ideas that run the gamut of possible scenarios: busy weeknights, casual Friday nights, entertaining on Saturday nights, even do-able dinner parties to cover you at the last minute...for that Thursday-night dinner invitation that your spouse just maybe forgot to mention? Just remember to check the yield on each recipe, as you may need to double or halve it to suit your needs. —the editors

Thanksgiving Menu

starters

Mini Savory Clafoutis, p. 53

Goat Cheese Marinated with Lemon & Herbs, p. 14, with crackers or toasts

Assorted olives

Starter wines

Mionetto Prosecco Rosé (Italy); \$11.

Ruggeri Gold Label Prosecco (Italy); \$10.

main course

Brined Roast Turkey with Sage Butter & Mushroom Gravy, p. 75

sides

Classic Bread Dressing, p. 10e

Cranberry-Orange Relish with Ginger, p. 10e

Orange-Dijon Green Beans, p. 10e

Creamy Brussels Sprout Gratin, p. 48

Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes with Horseradish, p. 10e

Main-course wines

White wines listed from off-dry to dry:

2003 Beringer Chenin Blanc (California) \$6; slightly sweet.

2003 Covey Run Riesling (Washington State) \$9; off-dry.

E&M Berger Gruner Veltliner (Austria) \$12; dry

Annie's Lane Riesling 2003 (Clare Valley Australia) \$14; dry.

Red wines listed from light to fuller bodied:

2003 Rosemount Diamond Label Pinot Noir (Australia); \$7.

2001 Potel-Avion Morgon Château-Gaillard (Beaujolais); \$19.

2002 Meridian Pinot Noir Reserve (Santa Barbara, California); \$16.

Black Opal Barossa Shiraz (Australia); \$15.

dessert

Ginger Apple-Crumb Pie, p. 65

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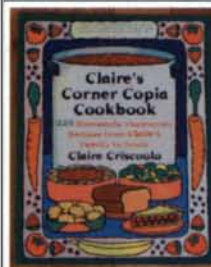
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Rustic Roast Chicken Dinner

Mustard-Crusted Roast Chicken, p. 42

Mashed Potatoes with Olive Oil & Parsley, p. 10e

Long-Cooked Green Beans with Oregano, p. 10e

Apple-Cranberry Crisp, p. 64

TO DRINK: For the mustard flavoring in the chicken, a full-bodied Chardonnay (try La Crema from California's Sonoma Coast, \$15) or medium-bodied Pinot Noir (2002 Echelon, also from California, \$11) would be the thing.

Sophisticated Vegetarian Dinner

"Last of the Yakima Peppers" Peperonata, p. 41, served on crostini with an arugula salad

Butternut Squash Ravioli with Rosemary Oil, p. 94c

Cornmeal Rosemary Cake with Pine Nuts & Orange Glaze, p. 44

TO DRINK: For the peperonata, try a crisp Sauvignon Blanc like the 2003 Kim Crawford from New Zealand (\$14). Follow with a crisp white wine with forward fruit to match the rich flavors of the squash, like the 2003 Renwood Viognier "Select Series" (\$10).

Weeknight One-Dish Meals

Broiled Tex-Mex Drumsticks with Avocado & Tomato Salad, p. 94c

TO DRINK: This is a dish for beer; try a pale ale like Sierra Nevada.

Mediterranean Beef Wraps with Roasted Bell Peppers, p. 56

TO DRINK: A medium-weight red wine with plummy fruit, like the 2002 Cypress Shiraz from California (\$7).

Sausage, Potato, & Apple Sauté, p. 94c

TO DRINK: A dry or off-dry Riesling; try 2003 Mönchhof Estate from Germany (\$12).

Greek-Style Shrimp Salad, p. 94c

TO DRINK: A crisp, citrusy wine with herbal notes like Albariño; try the 2002 Martin Codax (\$14).

Rib-Eye Steak Sandwiches, p. 55

TO DRINK: A light- to medium-weight Shiraz like Delicato (\$7) or a medium-weight Rhône blend like 2001 Guigal Côtes du Rhône (\$12).

Chicken Coconut Soup, p. 61

TO DRINK: Try a young, bright rosé like Bonny Doon's Ca' del Solo Big House Pink from California (\$10).

Ham, Mushroom & Chive Savory Clafoutis, p. 52

TO DRINK: A fruity wine with good acidity like a Gamay-based wine from France; try the 2003 Beaujolais-Villages from Domaine Louis Tête (\$10).

add a crusty loaf of bread or a salad of fall lettuces to round out the meal

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READER SERVICE NO. 92

from the editor

Decisions, decisions

You'd agree, I bet, that it's never easy planning an entertaining menu, but it can be fun. It's like solving a puzzle.

There's the "what to serve with" dilemma. For instance, my mother often calls me with questions like, "I've got this great recipe for Chinese Chicken Salad that I want to make for my party, but I don't know what to serve with it." Hmm...that's a tough one. In this case, I suggested she abandon the idea of traditional side dishes and instead offer an assortment of boldly flavored main-dish salads.

Then there's the "I only like chicken, I'm on a low-carb diet, I don't eat fish, I don't like orange vegetables" dilemma. Who needs guests anyway, you begin to think? I often face this quandary, as my friends' tastes run the gamut from "I could eat sushi every night" to "I could live on hamburgers." When both tastes collide at a party, I use this strategy: I roast or grill a delicious cut of meat, prepare a simple potato or rice side dish, and then make some really interesting sauces, salads, or side dishes to serve on the side or pass around. Everybody can juke up the flavor of his own food to suit his taste.

Finally, there's the "how to plan everything to come out of the oven or off the stove at the same time and be warm but not overcooked" dilemma. OK, I admit, I have not solved this problem, but two of the best ways to cheat are: a) always warm your plates, and b) in the case of Thanksgiving, always have hot gravy. But while I'm personally not so good at the timing thing, I'm pleased to say that every *Fine Cooking* entertaining menu—like Tom Douglas's delicious harvest menu on p. 38—includes a thorough timetable and lots of make-ahead ideas.

And *Fine Cooking* gives you plenty of menu options. For Thanksgiving, we have a selection of fifteen of our favorite side dish recipes (see p. 10E) to help solve that "keeping everyone happy" problem. For that "what to serve with" question, see the menu ideas on pp. 10-12. And in case you're stuck for a starter, I offer you a simple idea at right.

—Susie Middleton, editor

Mining the treasures of back issues

Looking at my row of *Fine Cooking* magazines (I have every issue) it occurred to me one day that there were treasures there I had not mined. I dreamed up this solution: For one week, I would feature one issue in numerical order, starting with *Fine Cooking* #1. I would write the number on the calendar to keep track of my progress. I would reread the tips. I would use one recipe I had not

used before. It's been a delicious method for unearthing good things overlooked the first time around.

—Jeanie Foote,
Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico

A pizza stone for the grill

I read your article on grilling pizza by Frank McClelland in *Fine Cooking* #66. It was very helpful. I enjoy cooking pizza on my outdoor grill. I thought you

(Continued on p. 16)



Goat Cheese Marinated with Lemon & Herbs

Serves four to six as an hors d'oeuvre with crostini or crackers.

4-ounce log fresh goat cheese, sliced into 6 equal rounds
2 teaspoons (loosely packed) freshly grated lemon zest
2 tablespoons finely chopped drained oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes

½ teaspoon minced capers
1 teaspoon coarsely chopped fresh thyme leaves

Sea salt or kosher salt
3 small rosemary sprigs
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil; more if needed

Crostini (toasted baguette slices) or good-quality crackers for serving

In a small, shallow dish (about 1½-cup capacity, preferably straight-sided; I use a small cazuela), arrange the six pieces of goat cheese in one layer. Don't worry if some of the cheese pieces crumble; just tuck them into the dish. Sprinkle the lemon zest, sun-dried tomatoes, capers, and thyme over the cheese. Sprinkle a little sea salt (fleur de sel is great if you have it) or kosher salt over the cheese, and tuck the rosemary sprigs into the dish. Pour the olive oil over the cheese so that it just covers it (use a little more if necessary). Let the cheese marinate in the refrigerator for two to six hours (you can serve it sooner, too). Bring the dish to room temperature (about 45 minutes) before setting out with a small hors d'oeuvre knife and a plate of crostini or crackers. Spread a teaspoon or so of the cheese (with some of the marinade ingredients) over a crostini or cracker to serve.

Getting the most from your recipes

How to follow a recipe

- ❖ Before you start, read the recipe from start to finish so there are no surprises.
- ❖ Before actually starting to cook or bake, gather all the necessary ingredients and equipment. Prepare the ingredients according to the directions in the ingredient list (see below for more on this).
- ❖ For determining doneness, always rely first on the recipe's sensory descriptor, such as "cook until golden brown." Consider any times given in a recipe merely as a guide for when to start checking for doneness.

Watch those modifiers

A recipe ingredient list contains words such as "diced" and "chopped" that tell you how to prepare each ingredient for the recipe, but what you may not realize is that the placement of these "preparation modifiers" in the ingredient line is as important as the modifier itself. Take for example the following two similar lines that you may see in a recipe ingredient list:

- 1 cup rice, cooked
- 1 cup cooked rice

The first line is telling you to take 1 cup of rice and cook it; the second line is calling for 1 cup of rice that has already been cooked. The difference between the two is about 2 cups of cooked rice, and that can make a big difference in the outcome of a recipe.

Ingredients

Unless otherwise noted, assume that

- ❖ butter is unsalted;
- ❖ eggs are large (about 2 ounces each);
- ❖ flour is all-purpose (don't sift unless directed);
- ❖ sugar is granulated;
- ❖ salt is table salt; if the recipe calls for kosher salt (which is coarser than table salt) and you only have table salt, use a bit less of it;
- ❖ fresh herbs, greens, and lettuces are washed and dried;
- ❖ garlic, onions, and fresh ginger are peeled.

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might want to know that you can buy a pizza/baking stone for your grill from a company on the Internet. I bought a FibraMent Stone about a year ago. It improved the bake and reduced the amount of time to cook a pizza. Keep up the good work. I enjoy your magazine very much.

—Mike Casey,
Oak Forest, Illinois

Editors' note: Baking stones cannot be placed directly over grill flames. FibraMent stones for the grill come with a protective metal pan.

Corn from a whole cob

I like your method of cutting corn off the cob, which you explained in *Fine Cooking* #66 (p. 69). Instead of cutting the ear of corn in half, you can also just start in the middle of the whole ear, cut the kernels down to the end, and when the bottom half is done, turn the cob around and do the other half in the same way. This variation accomplishes the same thing, and you don't have to cut the cob in half, which is sometimes difficult.

—Constance Frana,
via email

Grateful for great wine picks

Thank you for including such great wine recommendations in every issue of *Fine Cooking*. Every bottle I've tried has been excellent and exactly as described. With all the wines available, it can be intimidating picking something out point blank. Keep up the good work!

—Christina Bosco,
via email

A wine from any other place

My wife and I have been reading *Fine Cooking* since the beginning, and we constantly recommend your magazine to our friends and associates. I work for a wine agency that imports d'Arenberg into Ontario and was very pleased to see the recommendation of The Olive Grove Chardonnay for grilled food in *Fine Cooking* #66. I'd like to point out that d'Arenberg Chardonnay comes from McLaren Vale, not from South Australia. The McLaren Vale is a very distinct growing region in Australia with a specific style and profile, much like Sonoma or Alexander Valley.

—Mark Donaldson,
via email

^{fine}Cooking special events

Fine Cooking has teamed up with Frei Brothers Reserve winery and Sur La Table cookware retailer on a special holiday cooking event designed to get you inspired, informed, equipped and energized for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and more. We've created a special Web site, www.holidayfeasting.com, where you'll find excellent *Fine Cooking* recipes for holiday menus, useful food and wine pairing

tips for entertaining from Frei Brothers Reserve, and advice on choosing and using the right equipment for preparing your holiday feasts from the experts at Sur La Table.

And we're "going live" with all this holiday excitement. *Fine Cooking* contributors Pam Anderson, Diane Morgan, and Molly Stevens will teach a fantastic Thanksgiving menu at Sur La Table stores across the country, with wine tasting and advice from Frei Brothers Reserve. Classes will take place at various locations

from November 1 through 17; get specifics on www.holidayfeasting.com, surlatable.com, or call your nearest Sur La Table store.

See Molly Stevens teach recipes from her new book, *All About Braising*, at Sur La Table stores around the country, from October 18 through 28; visit surlatable.com for details.

And for radio listeners, contributing editor Abby Dodge appears on "Good Food with Evan Kleiman" on KCRW in the Santa Monica area.

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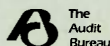
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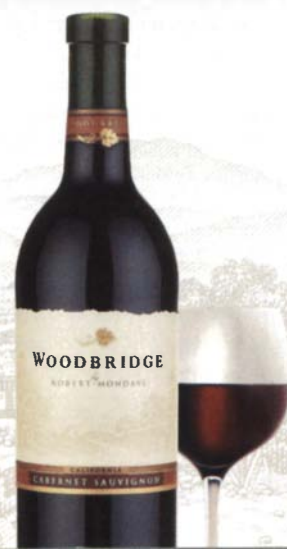
Just like raising kids, making great wine isn't a 9 to 5 job. At least, not the way we do it here at Woodbridge. I've been working with my team for more than twenty years, day and night, to keep making our wines better. And from back when the winery got started, we've known there aren't any shortcuts. So we age our wines in small oak barrels, and we sample every barrel over and over again (that's the fun part). All to bring you our great tasting, award-winning wines. And then, after I've tucked my wines in for the night, I can sleep just fine.



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READER SERVICE NO. 95

raw or cooked, fennel is fabulous

BY RUTH LIVELY

Fennel has a split personality. Raw, it's got wonderful crunch and a cool flavor laced with anise. But when it's braised, roasted, fried, baked, or grilled, fennel reveals its other side: It gets soft—even silky—and its licorice flavor melts away to just a hint of its raw self.

There are two forms of edible fennel. One is strictly an herb whose leaves, stalks, and seeds are used as flavorings; the other—often called Florence fennel—is the vegetable we find in the market.

We refer to fennel “bulbs,” but that swollen portion is really the thickened, succulent stem of the plant growing in tight layers above

the ground. Fennel thrives in cool weather; its seasons are spring and fall, though as with many vegetables, it's usually available year-around. Grocers sometimes label fennel as anise, a misnomer.

Fennel is a natural partner for fish and shellfish, particularly shrimp and scallops, but it's also very good with pork, chicken, lamb, beef, and duck. It pairs well with onions, leeks, tomatoes, artichokes, and potatoes. As for seasonings, take a cue from fennel's region of origin, the Mediterranean. Olives and olive oil, lemon juice, balsamic vinegar, saffron, anchovies, and the anise-flavored liquor called pastis are good matches.

Easy ways with fennel

Make a fennel gratin by layering blanched fennel slices in a gratin dish with tomato sauce or cream. Top either version with fresh breadcrumbs tossed with olive oil and grated Parmesan and bake until tender and bubbly.

Parboil fennel wedges, set on a broiler tray, top with butter and grated Parmesan, and broil until browned and bubbly.

Grill blanched wedges of fennel, drizzle with balsamic vinegar, and serve as a side dish or add to a pasta or salad.

Make a salad of thinly sliced fennel, arugula, apples, and shaved Parmesan or Dry Jack cheese. Toss with an anchovy-spiked vinaigrette.

Cook thin slivers of fennel slowly in oil until caramelized and serve as a side dish or as a topping for crostini or pizza.

Fry fennel. Dip thinly sliced fennel in lightly whisked egg whites, dredge in seasoned flour or cornmeal, and fry. Sprinkle with salt and lemon juice and eat while hot.

How to trim and cut fennel for any dish

To prep fennel, I trim off and discard the stalks and fully expanded leaves, or save them to use in stocks. I often save the dense, tight, baby leaves for mincing and garnishing the finished dish. If the outer layer of the bulb is in good shape and isn't too fibrous, I use it; otherwise, I break it off and feed it to my rabbit. I carefully trim off a thin slice of the root end, leaving the rest of the core intact to hold together wedges or vertical slices (top two photos at right). For diced or slivered fennel, I'll cut the bulb lengthwise in half or quarters, and then cut away the dense inner core.



Wedges for braising or roasting



Vertical slices for grilling or frying



Slivers or dice for sautés, soups, or risotto



Crosswise slices for salads

(In Season continues on p. 22)

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Fennel as a supporting player

- ❖ When making risotto, add diced fennel along with leeks or onions to the pot before adding the rice.
- ❖ Boil fennel slices until tender, purée them, and then fold them into mashed potatoes.
- ❖ Tuck thin slices of fennel and lemon inside whole fish before roasting or grilling.
- ❖ Put fennel wedges in the roasting pan alongside chicken or pork, or set the meat on a bed of thinly sliced fennel.
- ❖ Simmer diced fennel and tomatoes together for a flavorful base for fish chowder or vegetable soup.
- ❖ Add thinly sliced fennel to your favorite lemon-Dijon vinaigrette and let sit for 20 minutes so the fennel softens somewhat. Use to dress a salad or as a sauce for salmon.
- ❖ Add fennel to leek and potato soup for another dimension of flavor.
- ❖ Simmer diced or slivered fennel with white beans, or with chickpeas and tomatoes. Drain, season with olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper, and serve as a warm or room-temperature salad.



Fennel likes spring and fall's shorter days and cooler temperatures. To prevent bolting in the long, hot days of summer, time spring fennel plantings to be mature by mid-June, before the summer solstice. In regions with long growing seasons, fall is an excellent time to grow fennel. If fennel does go to flower in your garden, let the seeds mature, harvest them when they've turned brown and dry, and use them in spice mixes to flavor meats, soups, pickles, and vinaigrettes.

Braised Fennel with Pastis

Serves four.

If you don't have a pan large enough to hold all the fennel wedges in one layer, brown the fennel in batches on top of the stove, and then braise them in a covered pan in the oven. Plan on one large bulb for every two people. Pastis, an anise-flavored liquor, is my favorite, but if you can't find it, Pernod is a good substitute.

2 large bulbs fennel (about 2½ pounds total), rinsed and patted dry
Pinch saffron threads (optional)
2 tablespoons olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons pastis, or ¼ cup dry white wine or vermouth
¾ cup homemade or low-salt chicken broth or water

Trim off the fennel stalks. Trim about 2 tablespoons of the frilly, dill-like leaves from the stalks and set aside. Discard the stalks (or save to add to soups or broths). Cut the bulbs into lengthwise quarters, or, if the bulbs are very large, into sixths. Each wedge should be 2 to 3 inches wide and should be held intact with a portion of the core. Set a large (10-inch) skillet over medium heat. If using the saffron, put it in the dry pan and let heat for a couple of minutes. Pour in the olive oil and swirl to coat the bottom of the pan. Add the fennel wedges, flat side down, and season lightly with salt and pepper. Increase the heat to medium high. When the first side is brown, after 3 minutes, turn the fennel and season again with salt and pepper. Brown the second flat side, turn, season, and brown the rounded side the same way. The total browning time should be about 10 minutes.

Lower the heat to medium, give the pan a minute to cool slightly, and then add the pastis, wine, or vermouth. Let the alcohol cook until nearly evaporated, 30 to 60 seconds, and then add the broth or water. Lower the heat to medium low, cover, and simmer gently until the core is tender when pierced with a table fork, 30 to 40 minutes. Turn the pieces every 10 minutes so they cook evenly and, if necessary, add more water, ¼ cup at a time, to keep the pan from getting dry. (A glass lid makes it easy to monitor the moisture level.) While the fennel cooks, mince the reserved leaves.

Transfer the fennel wedges to a platter, turning them to sit on their rounded sides. If the braising liquid looks watery, boil briefly until it reduces to a syrupy consistency. Drizzle the syrupy juices over the fennel, season to taste with salt and pepper, and sprinkle the minced leaves on top. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

Ruth Lively writes, cooks, and gardens in New Haven, Connecticut. ♦

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4 Ice Cubes

Optional: Strawberries, fresh or frozen
Combine all ingredients in a blender container and process until frothy. Divide into two stemmed glasses and garnish with strawberries. Makes 2 servings.

Try substituting your favorite Dickinson's® flavor!



Citrus Chicken with Raspberry Sauce



Marinade:

1 jar Dickinson's® Lemon or Lime Curd
8 oz. Plain Yogurt
3 Tbsp. Cilantro, chopped
1 sm. Jalapeno Pepper, seeded & chopped
1 tsp. Salt
6 Chicken Breast Halves, skinless, boneless

Sauce:

1 jar Dickinson's® Pure Seedless Cascade Mountain™ Red Raspberry Preserves
2 Tbsp. Lime Juice

In a medium bowl combine Curd, yogurt, cilantro, jalapeno and salt; blend well. Marinate chicken for 4 hrs. or overnight. Discard marinade. Grill chicken until it is no longer pink. Stir together Preserves and lime juice and drizzle over chicken. Serve immediately. Makes 6 servings.



Raspberry Lemon Trifle



1 jar Dickinson's® Pure Seedless Cascade Mountain™ Red Raspberry Preserves
1 jar Dickinson's® Lemon Curd
1 lg. box Instant Vanilla Pudding Mix
1 c. Milk
1 10"-rd. Angel Food Cake
1 8-oz. container Whipped Topping
Optional: Raspberries, fresh or frozen

Tear cake into small pieces, set aside. Mix pudding & milk, then fold in Curd; set aside. Put a layer of cake pieces (about 1/3) on the bottom of a trifle dish or deep glass dish. Stir Preserves with a spoon to soften, then spoon 1/3 on top of the 1st cake layer, then top with 1/3 of the Curd mixture & 1/3 whipped topping. Repeat layering until all of the cake is used up. Refrigerate for 2 hrs. Garnish with optional raspberries. Makes 10-12 servings.



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I love making Thai curry at home but I can never find kaffir lime leaf. What is this ingredient, and where can I find it?

—Adam Weiss, via email

A Su-Mei Yu replies: Kaffir lime leaf is that secret ingredient that brings a Thai curry together: It coaxes out the aromas and flavors in the spice blend, it rounds out the entire dish, and it lends a bouquet all its own. The leaves come from the makrut lime tree and are sold at Asian markets. Expect to see less and less of the term “kaffir,” because it’s derogatory in Arabic and in some southern African languages. More and more recipes now refer to the ingredient as *mah krud* (its Thai name) or wild lime leaf.

When I can’t find fresh leaves, I don’t bother with dried or frozen versions, because they lack the fresh version’s essence. Instead, substitute grated lime zest, which will add a citrusy dimension, although not the perfume for which this Thai ingredient is renowned.

Su-Mei Yu is the author of Cracking the Coconut and Asian Grilling.

such as balsamic or red-wine vinegar, near the end of the cooking process can kick up the flavor some.

Or, use other liquids in place of the wine. Some options include tomato juice (a 14½-ounce can of diced tomatoes contains a cup of juice along with a scant cup of tomatoes, which add texture to the stew), orange juice, beer, or even coconut milk for a curry-flavored stew. If it’s a pork stew, you might also consider apple juice or cider. I also like to substitute mushroom broth for red wine, soaking ½ ounce dried mushrooms (any kind) in 1½ cups boiling water for 5 minutes and straining; add the reconstituted mushrooms to the stew if you like.

Pam Anderson is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking and a cookbook author. Her most recent book is CookSmart.

Have a question of general interest about cooking? Send it to Q&A, Fine Cooking, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by email to fc@taunton.com, and we’ll find a cooking professional with the answer.

I’ve always read that pie dough should be handled as little as possible, yet I make a tender crust by smearing the dough with the heel of my hand.

Why is this so successful?

—Barbara Steer, via email

A Carole Walter replies: Generally, pie dough should be handled as little as possible so that you don’t get a tough crust. While there are many ways to combine butter and flour, the smearing you describe is a European pastry blending method called *fraisage* (pronounced *freh-sazh*). Here, the butter pieces are cut into the flour until they’re the size of beans. Then the butter pieces are smeared into the flour on the countertop to incorporate them, allowing the fat to wrap itself around the flour. This shortens the strands of gluten, which produces a more tender pastry with a finer texture. But be careful: It’s easy to overdo *fraisage*. If you smear

too much, the butter begins to melt, and the gluten in the flour becomes too elastic, producing tough, overworked dough.

Carole Walter is a pastry teacher and the author of several cookbooks, including Great Pies & Tarts.

What can I use in place of red wine in beef stews and pot roasts?

—Rose Thomas, Birmingham, Michigan

A Pam Anderson replies: There are many options for those who don’t want to cook with wine. A classic red-wine stew or pot roast is usually simmered in a combination of red wine and broth. Figure 3 cups of liquid (2 cups broth and 1 cup wine) for every 3 pounds of meat. One of the simplest alternatives to wine is to make the stew or roast with all broth. (Note that unless it’s homemade, canned low-salt chicken broth is preferable to canned beef broth in a stew made with red meat). Adding a splash of vinegar,

How do I store a tomato that’s been sliced into?

—Roberta Brown, Boston, Massachusetts

A Dennis Kihlstedius replies: Keeping a tomato out of the refrigerator is crucial to preserving its flavor. Once a tomato falls below 50°F, its flavor enzymes are destroyed. This also causes the texture of the tomato to break down and become mealy.

After slicing a tomato, cover the cut side only (not the entire tomato) with plastic wrap. Then set the tomato, cut side down, on a flat plate. Storing it this way on the countertop, not in the refrigerator, should allow you to safely keep the tomato for at least another 24 hours.

It’s most important to cut the tomato with a clean knife, not one that was used to slice meat for your sandwich or to spread mayonnaise. This prevents cross-contamination of other organisms to the tomato.

Dennis Kihlstedius is a technical consultant to the California Tomato Commission and the Florida Tomato Committee. ♦

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Chardonnay, Russian River Valley

Big and intense, Frei Brothers Reserve Chardonnay is big and intense with a long crisp finish. With complex varietal characters of bright citrus, pear, and peach, it has a subtle hint of vanilla, spice, and toasty oak and is an ideal complement to Butter-Rubbed, Cider-Glazed Roast Turkey and Dressing with Apples, Bacon, and Caramelized Onions.

Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley

Bursting with concentrated aromas and flavors of bright berry, cherry, and rose petal, Frei Brothers Reserve Pinot Noir is an ideal pairing for holiday turkey and beef dishes. Medium to full-bodied, it's smooth and velvety, and balanced by a hint of sweet vanilla and spice. Enjoy a glass with Brined & Sage Butter Rubbed Roast Turkey with Mushroom Gravy.

Merlot, Dry Creek Valley

For classic Merlot flavors of cherry, berry, and cocoa, enjoy Frei Brothers Reserve Merlot. Medium-bodied and with pure fruit flavors, it has firm tannins balanced by subtle notes of vanilla and toasty oak and is the ideal pairing with Spiced Rubbed Prime Rib.



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WINNING TIP

A better way to stuff (and unstuff) a bird

Before I stuff chicken or turkey, I line the empty cavity with a layer of rinsed cheesecloth—and then I add the stuffing. This makes removing the cooked stuffing much easier. Instead of digging around with a spoon, I simply grab the edges of the cheesecloth and pull out all the stuffing at once.

—Kim Marchuk,
Vancouver, British Columbia



A gold mesh coffee filter works overtime

My kitchen is very small, so I try to get the most out of every kitchen tool I have. I recently discovered that my reusable gold mesh coffee filter can do double-duty as a strainer: After steaming clams, I wanted to reserve the broth but saw sand in the bottom of the pot. The coffee filter happened to be within reach, so I used it to strain the broth. Now I also use the filter for straining small quantities of sauce and gravy.

—Tonya Rubiano,
Westfield, New Jersey

A prize for the best tip

Attention clever cooks: We want your best tips—we'll pay for the ones we publish—and we'll give a prize to the cleverest tip in each issue. Write to Tips, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506 or email fc@taunton.com.

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A foil shield for pie crusts

To keep the edges of pie crust from browning too quickly, I used to wrap little strips of foil around the rim of the pie, a tedious process. Now, I simply take a square of foil somewhat larger than the pie, cut a big X through the center, and place it over the pie. Then I fold back the quadrants from the center and secure the edges of the foil around the pie pan.

—Carol Spier, via email

Pomegranate seeds add crunch to cranberry sauce

For years now, I've been adding pomegranate seeds to both cooked cranberry sauce and sweet or savory cranberry relish—they add a delightful juicy crunch. For every two bags of cranberries, I add the seeds of one pomegranate, taking care to remove all the bitter white pith from the seeds. I add the seeds the night before serving, which gives them time to marinate in the acidity, sugar, and salt.

—Sarah Jane Freymann,
New York City

(Tips continues on p. 30)



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Trim beans by the handful

Here's how to quickly trim green beans: Grab a handful, and, holding them loosely, tap the stem ends on the cutting board until all the stems line up. Then lay the beans on the board and slice off the stems in one cut. Repeat the process to remove the tips of the beans, if you like.

—Maria Reid, via email

A baking sheet is handy for dredging

When I dredge food for sautéing or frying, I set a bowl of egg wash in the center of a rimmed baking sheet. Then I scoop the flour and bread crumbs directly onto the baking sheet on either side of the bowl. This leaves me with a clean counter and fewer dishes to wash.

—Karen Brack, Garland, Texas

Keep a cookbook in the car

I keep an extra copy of my favorite cookbook in the car so that when I stop at the supermarket on my way home from work, I can just choose a recipe from the book, jot down the ingredients I need, and run into the store to shop. Once I'm home, I prepare the recipe using the copy of the book that I keep in my kitchen.

—Marcella Pascualy, Mercer Island, Washington

FREEZING

Getting the air out of freezer bags

To prevent freezer burn, it's important to get all the air out of the freezer bag, but most of us don't have a vacuum-sealer. Some people improvise by sucking the air out through a straw. I prefer to put the food in the bag and immerse the open bag up to the top edge in water. The water pressure forces all the air out of the bag. Then I zip the bag closed and take it out of the water.

—Matt Kaspar, Austin, Texas

Freezing meat efficiently

When I buy meat in bulk, I put small portions into plastic sandwich bags, labeling and dating each with a permanent marker. Then I put these small bags into a big freezer bag and label it chicken, beef, or whatever. When I need meat, I take out a small bag or two, but I leave the bigger bag in the freezer. Not only does this save me money on freezer bags, but my meats also get double protection from freezer burn.

—Desiree Mendoza, Veradale, Washington



Slice butter with a pastry cutter

You can use a sharp-bladed pastry cutter to slice a cold stick of butter into perfect little pats.

—Delores Jespersen, Grand Marais, Minnesota



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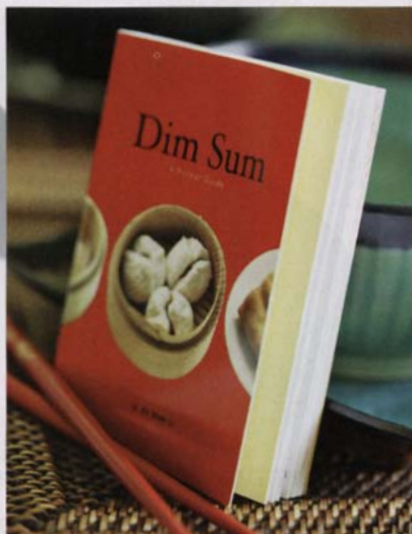
mini but mighty

Though scaled down in size, these tools and ingredients are big on function and flavor.

BY REBECCA FREEDMAN

A smaller santoku knife

You may have seen larger santoku knives on the market, but this one, with a blade of only 5 inches, is much more compact than your average chef's knife. It's a great option if you'd like a smaller, all-purpose knife for your kitchen, or for the novice cook who isn't comfortable wielding a larger blade. *LamsonSharp 5-inch santoku knife*, \$59.99, at *Professional Cutlery Direct* (800-859-6994; cutlery.com).



A pocket guide to dim sum

If you're unfamiliar with the small dishes that make up what Chinese restaurants call dim sum, then this little book is for you. With photos and descriptions, it demystifies traditional dumplings, soups, buns, and other treats you might encounter while ordering. And we like that the guide fits right in the palm of your hand, so it's easy to tote along. *Dim Sum: A Pocket Guide*, by Kit Shan Li, \$7.95 (*Chronicle Books*).

Tiny casseroles for baking or serving

The next time you make individual baked pastas or soufflés, charm your guests with these 8-ounce casseroles. They're great for presentation and versatile, too—safe for the oven, microwave, freezer, and dishwasher. We've used them for cooking, but they easily double as serving pieces for soups, dips, or condiments. *Le Creuset Petite Casseroles*, \$14.95 each at *The Chef's Resource* (866-765-2433; chefsresource.com).



A miniature chopper

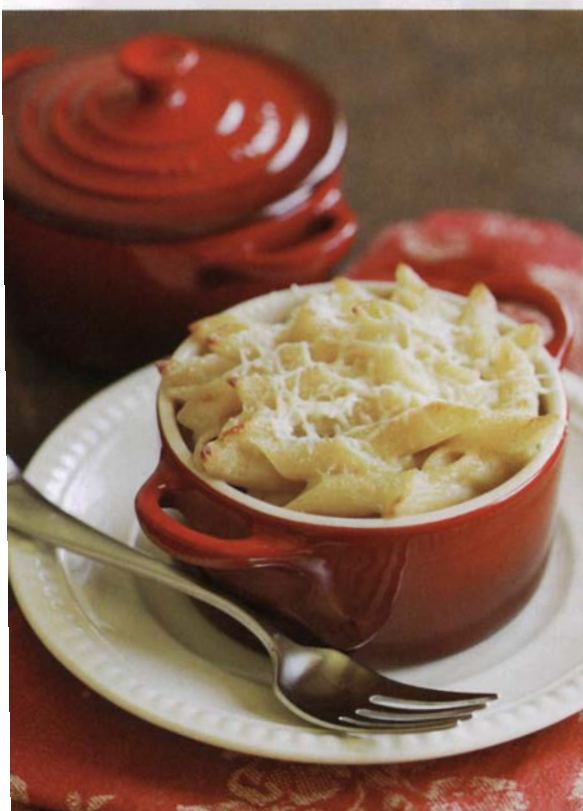
Unlike larger hand choppers on the market, this one's size prevents small ingredients like nuts and herbs from getting lost in the blades; we found that chopped items are easy to scoop right out. The chopper also comes with a detachable spoon for removing ingredients from the cup. *Oxo Good Grips mini chopper*, \$14.99, at *Bed, Bath & Beyond* (800-462-3966; bedbathandbeyond.com).



Lots of flavor in a little cube

For a quick way to add mushroom flavor to dishes, try these porcini bouillon cubes. We keep them in the pantry and stir them into soups, creamy pasta sauces, or rice dishes. Though you might be tempted to use one or two cubes at a time, we've found them so intensely flavored that even half of one will do the job. *Star Porcini Mushroom Cubes*, \$5 for a 3.9-ounce (10-cube) package, at *Salumeria Italiana* (800-400-5916; salumeriaitaliana.com).

(Great Finds continues on p. 34)



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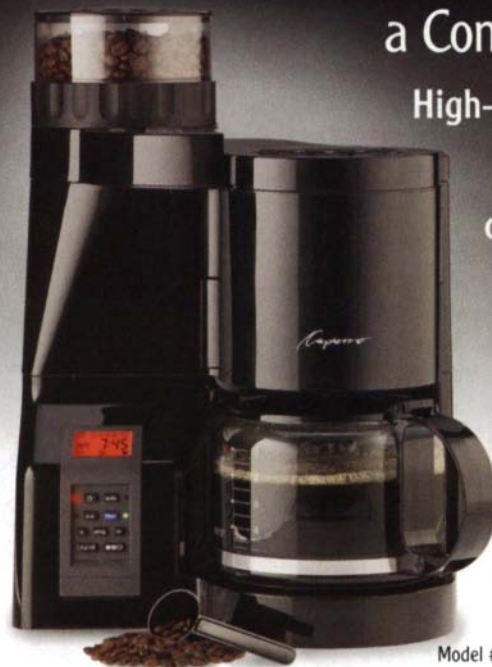
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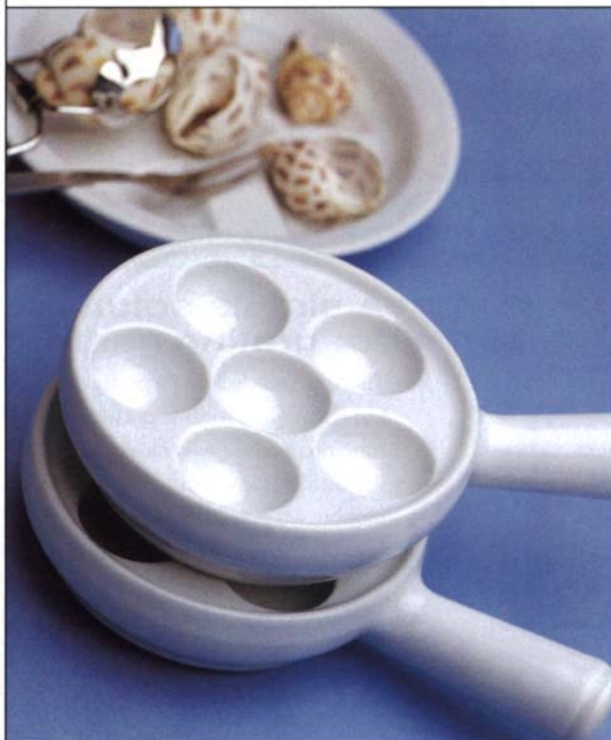
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Flexible knife block

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WMF Flexible Knife Block, \$89.95 at Tabletools.com (888-211-6603).



Spoon rest built for two

For us, this spoon rest resolved a small but persistent quandary: Where to put a second stirring spoon when you're cooking two dishes at once? This stainless-steel rest cradles both utensils so you won't make a mess of your stove.

Amco double spoon rest, \$14.95 at Cooking.com (800-663-8810).



A simple solution for grating garlic

This may look like just a pretty dish, but it's actually a garlic grater. By rubbing peeled garlic cloves over the dish's grooves in a circular motion, we pulverized the garlic in seconds. And unlike a regular grater or rasp (where little garlic pieces can get trapped), the flat shape of this dish makes it easy to scrape clean. *Supergrater, \$9.99 at Gourmetcatalog.com.*



A cheese for many wines

Rich and nutty with fruity-caramel notes, this aged Gouda gets our vote for the Miss Congeniality award. It's one of the most wine-friendly cheeses we've ever had and tastes just as good with crisp, dry whites as it does with moderately tannic, fruity reds and dessert wines like Muscat or Sauternes. *Pradera Aged Gouda, \$15.95 per pound, at FormaggioKitchen.com (888-212-3224).* —Amy Albert



A little book of big ideas

Who knew a technical reference could be so much fun? Francine Maroukian's uncommonly engaging how-to book, *Chef's Secrets* (Quirk Books, \$15.95), is small enough to stash in an apron pocket and chock full of tips from top chefs. Some tips are basic (How to Make a Pan Sauce), while others are vital (How to Roast a Chicken Perfectly), obscure (How to Fillet an Eel), or even extreme (How to Peel Tomatoes with a Blowtorch). Each tip is accompanied by a revealing interview with the chef. —Kimberly Y. Masibay

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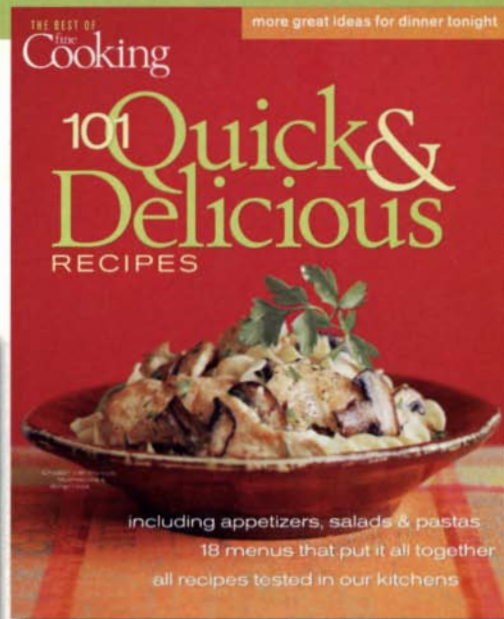
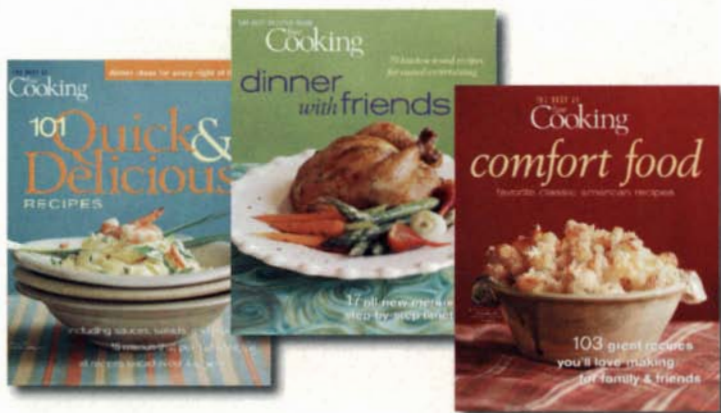
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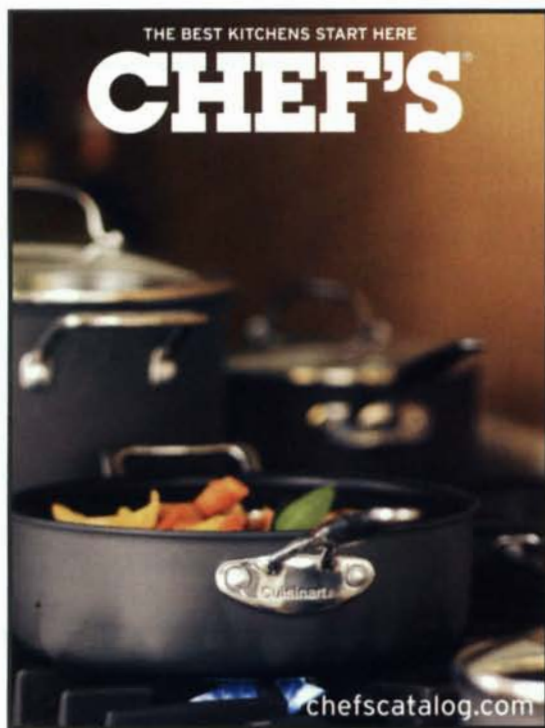


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A Seattle Chef's

Celebrate the sweet, ripe flavors of late summer with a rustic menu and a workable timetable

BY TOM DOUGLAS

At this time of year, farmers' markets in Seattle overflow with summer's last ripe tomatoes, sweet peppers, and tender green beans, and the fall harvest is coming in with pears and grapes of every color. Of course, this doesn't just happen in Seattle. Markets all across the country are awash with gorgeous produce, and that's a great reason to whip up a terrific dinner to share with friends.

Even though my wife, Jackie, and I own four restaurants and work long hours, we don't need an excuse to invite guests to our home for dinner whenever we can. Maybe it's because we both grew up in big, convivial households where dinner for twelve was commonplace and there was always room for another chair at the table.

Naturally, though, with our busy schedules, it's important that we keep entertaining hassle-free. This dinner is easy to pull off because much of it can be prepared ahead of time. (The timetable on p. 43 will guide you.)

As a restaurant chef, I've learned the value of keeping things simple. That's why this dinner menu features a pair of succulent roast chickens. What could be easier or more satisfying? While the chickens roast, I just set out the appetizer, finish the salad, and spend time with our guests.

As soon as you put a cocktail in someone's hand, the mood turns festive. And a cocktail matched to the menu or the season is an almost ef-



Relaxed Menu



**Homemade Bianco
with Icy Grapes**

**"Last of the
Yakima Peppers"
Peperonata with
Baguette Toasts**

**Mustard-Crusted
Roast Chickens**

**Warm Green
Bean, Pancetta
& Tomato Salad
with Parmesan**

**Cornmeal
Rosemary Cake
with Pine Nuts &
Orange Glaze**



reader review

We asked a *Fine Cooking* reader to give this menu a real-world test before publication. Here's what she reported:

"I found these recipes to be fairly easy, and the timetable was perfect. The mustard rub on the chicken added great flavor and sealed in moisture; the green bean salad was beautiful and delicious; and the cake was fantastic! It had a perfect balance of herbs, zest, and sweetness. The pine nuts were a delightful surprise."

—Christina Tilley,
Longmont, Colorado

fortless way to make even the simplest dinner seem special. My homemade bianco practically makes itself: Rosemary, mint, and lemon zest steep in a couple of bottles of Sauvignon Blanc. Six hours later, the wine is transformed into a fragrant herbal apéritif. For a nice harvest touch, pour the bianco over frozen red grapes instead of ice cubes.

This time of year, I like to use the last of the peppers from the Yakima Valley, east of Seattle (but you can use a selection of sweet to medium-hot peppers from your local grocery) to make a mushroom peperonata. It's colorful, olivy, salty, and piquant. Spooned onto a crisp baguette toast, it's the perfect starter. And since it can be made well ahead, there's no last-minute work involved.

Roasting a pair of chickens keeps your hands free. The mustard rub, which is slathered on the chickens a day ahead, was inspired by a prime-rib glaze that we served for years at Palace Kitchen. The rub gets crusty and delicious as the chickens roast to a golden nut brown. I like to take the chickens to a temperature of about 170°F; this leaves the meat thoroughly cooked and succulent, but not falling off the bone. The chickens need to rest for at least 10 minutes before you carve them, which gives you time to finish up the warm salad of green beans, tomatoes, and Parmigiano Reggiano.

Prep the ingredients ahead of time and finish the salad at the last minute. I cook the green beans and make the pancetta vinaigrette at the last minute so the salad will be warm and flavorful. But in advance, I cook the pancetta and prep the tomatoes, chives, and cheese. I also lay out the dressing ingredients beside the stove. It then takes just a few minutes to put the whole salad together.

Jackie always sets the table beautifully, so I find it easier to carve the chickens in the kitchen rather than at

the table. (You'll need a carving board with a moat because fat and juices will run off as you carve.) If you're planning to ask your guests to pass their plates up to you to be served, you can pile all the chicken on one beautiful platter. But if you're going to pass the chicken around the table, I suggest you use a few smaller platters rather than a big, heavy one. You don't want your guests to struggle.

Offer savory and sweet nibbles for dessert. I put out ripe pears and grapes, a round of creamy, aged Quillascutt goat cheese (made by a local producer), and a crusty loaf of the Dahlia Bakery's walnut bread. For a bite of something sweet, I serve wedges of one of my favorite cakes—a moist, orange-glazed cornmeal rosemary cake that Jackie bakes a day ahead and glazes on the day of the party. (If baking isn't your thing, pick up something sweet at a good bakery.) Then I pour each of my guests a glass of White Riesling Ice Wine or Moscato d'Asti, and we make a toast to the end of another beautiful summer.



wine choices

Start off with Sauvignon Blanc and move on to Chardonnay or Pinot Noir

For the bianco apéritif, use a crisp Sauvignon Blanc with vibrant citrus fruit, such as the 2002 Honig from Napa Valley (\$15) or the 2002 Chateau Ste. Michelle Horse Heaven Hills (\$17) from Washington's Columbia Valley—in fact, you can sip that very same Sauvignon Blanc with the warm green bean, pancetta, and tomato salad. The mustard-crust roast chickens can pair easily with either a full-bodied white like Chardonnay (like the 2001 Mount Eden

MacGregor Vineyard from Edna Valley, \$17, or the 2002 La Crema Sonoma Coast, \$15) or a medium-bodied red with light tannin such as Pinot Noir (try the 2001 Cambria Julia's Vineyard, \$17, or the 2002 Echelon California, \$11). To end the meal, pick up on the orange flavors of the cornmeal rosemary cake with a cup of top-quality Earl Grey tea that has fragrant citrus notes.

Tim Gaiser, a master sommelier, is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. Retail prices are approximate.

Homemade Bianco with Icy Grapes

Serves six to eight.

About 1 pound grapes, preferably a large, seedless variety such as Red Globe, plucked from the stems
2 3-inch sprigs fresh rosemary
2 3-inch sprigs fresh mint
2 bottles (750ml each) Sauvignon Blanc
2 3-inch strips lemon zest (pared with a vegetable peeler)

Rinse the grapes and pat them dry. Spread on a rimmed baking sheet and freeze until solid, several hours before guests arrive or overnight.

Rinse the herbs well. Open the wine bottles, stuff 1 sprig each of rosemary and mint and a strip of lemon zest into each bottle, recork, and refrigerate for 6 hours, or overnight.

To serve, set out glasses, put 3 to 5 frozen grapes (depending on size) in each glass, and pour in the chilled bianco.

How to make baguette toasts

Cut a baguette on the diagonal into slices about $\frac{1}{3}$ inch thick. Brush the slices on both sides with olive oil. Put the slices under the broiler, turning once, until golden and toasted.



“Last of the Yakima Peppers” Peperonata

Yields 3 cups; serves six to eight.

If you make this dish a few days before your party, bring it to room temperature and adjust the salt, pepper, and vinegar before serving.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil; more for seasoning (about 5 tablespoons)
2 pounds (about 7) assorted mild to medium-hot fresh peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound chanterelle, white button, or cremini mushrooms, cleaned, stems trimmed, and roughly chopped (to yield about $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ large yellow onion, roughly chopped (to yield 1 cup)
1 tablespoon minced garlic
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pitted chopped Kalamata olives
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pitted chopped green olives, such as Picholine or Lucques
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 tablespoons capers, drained and chopped
2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar; more for seasoning
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons anchovy paste
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Crackers, sliced baguette, or baguette toasts (see “How to make baguette toasts” at left)

Heat the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil in a 12-inch sauté pan or skillet over high heat. Add the peppers, mushrooms, and onion, and sauté, stirring frequently, until the liquid released by the vegetables evaporates and the vegetables start to brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium. If the pan seems too dry, add a little more oil. Continue cooking until the onions are translucent and the peppers and mushrooms are extremely soft, about another 15 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the olives, parsley, capers, vinegar, and anchovy paste. Stir in more olive oil to make the peperonata moist and oily. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add more vinegar if needed. Transfer the peperonata to a bowl and refrigerate or serve right away with crackers, sliced baguette, or baguette toasts.



Mustard-Crusted Roast Chickens

Serves six to eight.

1 cup Dijon mustard
½ cup minced shallots (about 2 large)
¼ cup minced garlic (12 to 16 cloves)
2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 whole chickens, about 3½ pounds each
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling

Make the mustard paste: In a small bowl, combine the mustard, shallots, garlic, and thyme, along with 2 teaspoons salt and 2 teaspoons pepper.

Prepare the chickens: Trim off and discard the wing tips. Trim any excess fat from the chickens, clean out the cavities, rinse under cold water, and pat dry. Set the chickens on a large dish and, using your hands, rub the mustard paste all over the outside (top and bottom) of the chickens. The coating should be generous but not gloppy. Rub any remaining paste into the cavities of the chickens. Put the dish in the refrigerator, uncovered, and let the chickens rest, breast side up, for several hours or overnight.

Roast the chickens: Heat the oven to 450°F. Put the chickens on a rack in a large roasting pan, a rimmed baking sheet, or two smaller pans. (If you use two

pans and put the chickens on different racks in the oven, be sure to rotate them occasionally during roasting.) Sprinkle a little salt and pepper over the chickens and then drizzle each with 1½ tablespoons olive oil. Roast for 25 minutes. Remove the roasting pan from the oven and drizzle each chicken with another 1 tablespoon olive oil. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F, rotate the pan, and continue roasting another 25 minutes. Baste each chicken with fat from the pan (use a spoon or a bulb baster). Rotate the pan and roast until the chickens are deep golden brown, crusty, and cooked through, about another 30 to 45 minutes. The chickens are done when an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the thigh reads 170° to 175°F and the juices run clear. Remove the chickens from the oven and let rest for 10 minutes before carving.

Carve the chicken, taking care to disturb the mustard crust as little as possible. Arrange the pieces on one or two platters and bring to the table.

Let guests lend a hand

Over the years, I've learned to accept a hand from enthusiastic guests. If guests want to contribute to the meal, you can give them a recipe from the menu to make at home and bring to the party. Even better, invite them to come over early and cook with you.



Warm Green Bean, Pancetta & Tomato Salad with Parmesan

Serves six to eight.

This salad tastes best if the green beans are freshly cooked and still warm when you toss them with the pancetta dressing.

4 medium tomatoes (about 18 ounces), preferably ripe heirlooms or garden tomatoes
5 tablespoons sherry vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
½ pound thinly sliced pancetta
5 to 7 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1½ pounds green beans, ends trimmed (and cut in half if the beans are extremely long)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup thinly sliced chives
4-ounce chunk Parmigiano Reggiano, shaved with a vegetable peeler or cheese plane (to yield about 1 cup shavings)

Core the tomatoes, slice them in half horizontally, and flick out most of the seeds and juice with a fingertip. Then cut the tomatoes into 1-inch chunks and put them in a large serving bowl.

In a small bowl, combine the vinegar and honey.

In a 10- or 12-inch sauté pan over medium heat, cook the pancetta in two or three batches until crisp and golden, 3 to 5 minutes per batch. Remove the pancetta from the pan, drain on paper towels, roughly chop, and

keep warm (or set aside at room temperature if making ahead). Depending on the pancetta, there might be lots of fat in the pan or there might be none. Pour the fat into a dish, measure out 2 tablespoons, and return it to the pan, discarding the rest. Add 5 tablespoons of the olive oil (or more to compensate if you didn't get enough pancetta fat) for a total of 7 tablespoons fat in the pan. Set aside.

When you're ready to serve, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Put the beans in the boiling water and cook until just tender, about 5 minutes. Drain the beans and spread on paper towels or a dishtowel to dry briefly. Put the warm beans in the bowl with the tomatoes and set it at the back of the stovetop to keep warm. Put the pancetta in a warm oven for a few minutes while you finish the dressing.

Return the pan with the reserved pancetta fat and oil to medium heat. When the fat is warm, whisk in the vinegar-honey mixture, turn the heat to high, and whisk until the mixture boils and emulsifies. Immediately pour the hot dressing over the vegetables in the bowl. Toss, season with salt and pepper, and add the chives. Sprinkle the chopped pancetta over the salad and scatter the cheese over the top; toss gently. Serve immediately.

A strategy for an easy dinner

Up to three days ahead

Make the peperonata and the mustard rub; refrigerate.

Up to one day ahead

Freeze the grapes.

Steep the bianco in the refrigerator.

Slather the chickens with the mustard rub; refrigerate.

Bake the cake and brush with the orange syrup.

The afternoon of the party

Glaze the cake.

Prepare the tomatoes and green beans for the salad; cook and chop the pancetta; set the dressing ingredients by the stove.

Make baguette toasts.

An hour before guests arrive

Heat the oven.

Slice the chives and cheese for the salad.

Remove the peperonata from the refrigerator.

Put the chickens into the hot oven to roast.

As guests arrive

Pour the bianco and serve the peperonata.

Put water on to boil for the green beans.

Ten minutes before serving the main course

Cook the beans as the chickens rest.

Make the hot dressing and toss the salad.

Carve the chicken.

Cornmeal Rosemary Cake with Pine Nuts & Orange Glaze

Yields one 9-inch cake; serves eight to ten.

FOR THE CAKE:

Soft butter for the pan
6¾ ounces (1½ cups) all-purpose flour
4½ ounces (¾ cup) finely ground yellow cornmeal (Quaker brand is fine)
⅓ cup coarsely chopped toasted pine nuts (about 1½ ounces)
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh rosemary
1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
5 ounces (⅔ cup) mascarpone, at room temperature
4 large eggs
10 ounces (1⅓ cups) granulated sugar
¼ pound (½ cup) unsalted butter, melted

FOR THE ORANGE SYRUP:

½ cup fresh orange juice
3 tablespoons granulated sugar

FOR THE ORANGE GLAZE:

1 tablespoon whole fresh rosemary leaves (stripped from the stem but not chopped)
5 ounces (1½ cups) sifted confectioners' sugar
5 tablespoons heavy cream
2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
1 teaspoon grated orange zest

Make-ahead tip

You can bake and glaze this cake the day you serve it. Or bake it a day ahead, brush it with the syrup, let it cool completely, wrap it in plastic, and store at room temperature. The afternoon before your dinner, glaze the cake.

Make the cake: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9x2-inch round cake pan, line the bottom with a round of parchment, and butter the parchment.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cornmeal, pine nuts, rosemary, orange zest, baking powder, and salt.

In a large bowl, briefly whisk the mascarpone to loosen it. Add the eggs one at a time, whisking to combine. Add the sugar and whisk until smooth. Using a rubber spatula, fold the dry ingredients, in two batches, into the wet ingredients, mixing until smooth. Stir in the melted butter with the rubber spatula until blended.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, spread evenly, and bake until the entire top of the cake is a rich golden brown and springs back when pressed gently in the center, 40 to 45 minutes. A skewer inserted in the middle of the cake should come out looking a bit moist, and the sides of the cake may have begun to pull away from the pan.

Make the orange syrup: While the cake is baking, combine the orange juice and sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat and cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sugar dissolves. Remove from the heat.

Let the cake cool in its pan on a rack for 5 minutes. Run a small knife around the cake. Set an inverted plate over the cake pan and, protecting your hands with a kitchen towel, invert the whole thing. The cake should slide right out onto the plate. Peel off the parchment and set a 9-inch cardboard round or another inverted plate over the cake and, again, invert the whole thing. Remove the top plate and the cake will be right side up. With a wooden skewer or toothpick, poke a few dozen holes all over the top of the cake. While the cake is still warm, brush the cake with the warm orange syrup. Continue brushing for several minutes,



giving the syrup time to sink into the cake, until you've used all the syrup. Let the cake cool completely.

Make the orange glaze: Bring a small saucepan of water to a boil. Have ready a small bowl of ice water. Put the rosemary leaves in a small sieve and dip it into the boiling water to blanch them for 1 minute. Drain the rosemary leaves and immediately set them (still in the sieve) into the ice water. Drain and spread the rosemary leaves on a paper towel to dry. In a bowl, whisk the confectioners' sugar, cream, and orange juice until smooth and then whisk in the blanched rosemary and the zest.

When the cake is cool, transfer it to a rack set over a baking sheet. (If your cake isn't on a cardboard round, use a wide spatula to transfer it.) Pour the glaze over the top of the cake and let it drip off the sides. You can gently tilt the cardboard or the wire rack back and forth to encourage the glaze to completely flow over the top of the cake. While the glaze is

still wet, transfer the cake to a cake plate.

Let sit for an hour or more before cutting the cake into wedges and serving. The glaze may or may not become firm, depending on the weather; it's delicious either way.

Tom Douglas owns Dahlia Lounge, Etta's Seafood, Palace Kitchen, and Dahlia Bakery in Seattle, Washington. ♦

Fall's Overlooked Vegetables

Discover how tempting these vegetables can be when you choose the right cooking method

BY EVA KATZ

As a regular farmers' market shopper, I'm always disheartened to see the thinning of the crowds in late fall. While I don't miss all that elbowing and shoving to get to the tomatoes and corn, I wouldn't mind seeing a bit more enthusiasm for those first turnips, Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, and parsnips. I suppose that many home cooks overlook these classic fall vegetables simply because they don't recognize their delicious potential, or perhaps because they just don't know what to do with them.

The truth is that I can understand why some people have hang-ups about certain fall vegetables; they're often prepared in untempting ways, cooked in a manner that brings out their less appealing attributes or smothered in sauces that mask their flavor. I take the opposite approach, choosing cooking methods and flavorings that highlight the natural flavor of the vegetable. My aim is to keep the preparation simple so the vegetable can speak for itself. Trust me on this. You can't help but fall for these vegetables once you try the recipes that follow.





Turnips

are one of the most
unappreciated of all
the fall vegetables,

which is too bad, as they have a complex and intriguing flavor.

Up front, they're strong and peppery, yet there are undertones of sweetness as well. Their open-grained texture does a remarkable job of absorbing flavors when they're simmered in stews and braises. I treat turnips as I do potatoes: I cut them in wedges and roast them alongside chicken or pork. Or I steam them until tender with a potato or two, mash with a bit of cream and butter, and fold in fresh chives or parsley. Good flavor pairings for turnips include apples, bacon, sage, mustard, and spices like cumin or coriander—all of which help to balance turnips' assertive flavor. (For more on turnips, see *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 80.)

Cider-Glazed Turnips & Apples with Sage & Bacon

Serves four to six.

Braising turnips transforms them into translucent, buttery, tender morsels. I prefer small turnips, but if all you can find are large ones, be sure to peel them thickly (I use a paring knife) or the turnip will be tough and taste bitter. This dish is a perfect accompaniment to roast lamb or pork.

1½ pounds small purple-top or white turnips (about 9 small)

4 slices bacon, cut into ½-inch pieces

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 cup apple cider

2 teaspoons granulated sugar

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 large firm, sweet apple such as Pink Lady or Braeburn

2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage

Peel the turnips and cut them in half lengthwise. Cut each half into wedges 1 inch thick at the widest point.

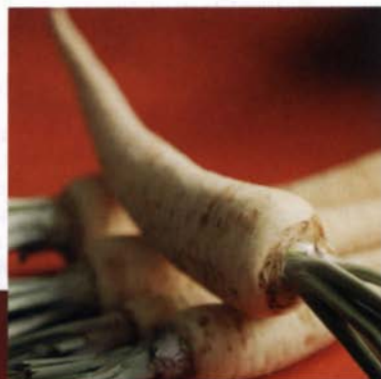
Put the bacon pieces in a large skillet and set over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until crisp, about 8 minutes. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels. Pour off the bacon fat from the pan and set the pan back on the burner. Add the butter and, when it's melted, add the turnips, apple cider, sugar, and 1½ teaspoons salt. Bring to a boil over high heat. Cover the pan with the lid slightly askew, reduce the heat to medium high, and cook at a steady boil, shaking the pan occasionally, until the turnips are just tender but not soft (a paring knife should enter a turnip with just a little resistance), 8 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile, peel and core the apple and cut it into ½-inch slices.

Uncover the pan, add the sliced apples and sage, and continue to boil, stirring occasionally, until the liquid has reduced to a sticky glaze, 2 to 3 minutes. The turnips should be soft and the apples should be crisp-tender. (If not, add a few tablespoons of water and continue to cook for another 1 to 2 minutes.) Toss in the cooked bacon and season to taste with black pepper and more salt if necessary.

Parsnips are incredibly versatile. Like turnips, they're wonderful mashed with potatoes for a silky purée or roasted with pork. One of the

simplest ways to cook parsnips is to cut them into thin sticks, toss with olive oil, salt, and pepper, and roast until sweet and caramelized. They make great puréed soups, either on their own or as a subtle "mystery ingredient" in broccoli, cauliflower, or squash soups. If possible, buy small to medium parsnips since they tend to be more uniform in shape and will cook more evenly.

Larger parsnips have a tough core that should be cut away before cooking. I like pairing parsnips with rosemary, thyme, warm spices, and browned butter.



Parsnip Pancakes with Caramelized Onions & Sour Cream

Serves four.

These pancakes are perfect partners for a simple roast like pork, lamb, or chicken. The onions can be cooked ahead and reheated just before serving; the parsnips can also be parcooked, grated, and combined with the chopped leek a few hours ahead.

3 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 large or 2 small yellow onions, thinly sliced
(to yield about 2 cups)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 pound small to medium parsnips (about 6 medium), peeled (if very thick, halve them lengthwise)
1 medium leek, white part only, finely chopped (to yield about ½ cup)
1 large egg, lightly beaten
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
Sour cream for garnish

In a medium skillet, heat 1 tablespoon each of the olive oil and butter over medium heat. When the foam subsides, add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until very soft and golden, 20 to 25 minutes; reduce the heat if they brown too quickly. Season with salt to taste and set aside.

Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, bring 2 quarts salted water to a boil. Add the parsnips (cut them in half if they don't fit in the pan) and cook for 3 minutes. Drain, run under cold water to cool them quickly, and drain again very well. Grate the parsnips in a food processor fitted with a medium grating disk. In a medium bowl, combine the parsnips, leek, and egg. Stir in the flour, 1 teaspoon salt, and ⅛ teaspoon pepper.

In a 10- to 12-inch heavy skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil and 1 tablespoon butter over medium-high heat until the foam subsides. Shape the parsnip mixture into four equal balls. Put them in the skillet and press on each with a flat spatula to make a cake about 3½ inches wide. Reduce the heat to medium and cook until browned on one side, 4 to 6 minutes. Turn the cakes over and brown the other side, 4 to 5 minutes. Flip to recrisp the first side, about 30 seconds. Drain briefly on paper towels and then serve while hot, garnished with a large dollop of sour cream and the caramelized onions.

Brussels sprouts

grow on large stalks, and some markets carry them in this impressive form. If you encounter

them, look for the stalk with the smallest sprouts, which will be sweeter. Cooked properly, Brussels sprouts have a pleasantly assertive, nutty, cabbagey flavor. But they're not forgiving, and when overcooked they become stinky and limp. One delicious preparation is to slice them and sauté them with browned butter and pecans. I also like to braise halved sprouts in stock with a bit of butter until tender and then reduce the liquid to a glaze at the

end; then I toss with lemon juice and fresh thyme for a lovely side dish. Other good pairings for Brussels sprouts are bacon or pancetta, walnuts, chestnuts, mustard, sage, and other hardy herbs.



Creamy Brussels Sprout Gratin

Serves six.

Roasting Brussels sprouts and then adding cream brings out their sweet, mellow side. This gratin can convert even the most confirmed Brussels sprout critic into a devotee.

2 pounds Brussels sprouts, stem ends trimmed and outer leaves removed; sprouts cut in half through the stem end
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup coarse fresh breadcrumbs (from a baguette or other white bread)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) finely grated Gruyère
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups heavy cream

Heat the oven to 425°F. Put the Brussels sprouts in a shallow baking dish that will hold them in a snug single layer (a 9x13-inch rectangle or slightly smaller oval is good). Toss with 2 tablespoons of the melted butter, $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt, and several grinds of pepper. Spread them evenly in the dish and roast, tossing once or twice, until browned in spots and tender when pierced with a knife, 25 to 30 minutes.

While the sprouts roast, combine the breadcrumbs with the remaining 1 tablespoon melted butter and $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt in a small bowl. Mix in the Gruyère.

When the Brussels sprouts are tender and browned, pour the cream over them and continue baking until the cream has thickened to a saucy consistency and coats the sprouts, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven. Set the oven to broil and position a rack to 6 inches below the broiler. Sprinkle on the breadcrumb mixture. Broil the gratin until the crust is deep golden brown, about 5 minutes.



Sweet potatoes

come in several varieties, some creamier and

sweeter and others less so, but I use them interchangeably.

Many markets label sweet potatoes as yams, but true yams are very starchy and not as sweet, quite a different tuber altogether. Sweet potatoes' earthy richness makes them a natural for gratins, soups, and pies. For a quick side dish, toss sweet potato wedges in olive oil and roast them; they cook faster than white potatoes. Or simply bake sweet potatoes in their skins and serve with butter or sour cream. I like to add a touch of maple syrup, molasses, or brown sugar to highlight the vegetable's sweetness. Or I use that natural sweetness as a counterpoint to play off stronger flavors such as ginger, chiles, and lime, spices like cumin and coriander, and herbs like cilantro and thyme.

Twice-Baked Sweet Potatoes with Chipotle Chile

Serves four.

Chipotle chiles are smoked jalapeños. For this recipe, you'll need them canned in adobo; you can usually find them with other canned chiles in the Mexican section of the supermarket. The stuffed potatoes can be made a day ahead, covered, and refrigerated. Bring them back to room temperature before baking.

4 small sweet potatoes of similar size (about 3 pounds total), scrubbed
1 to 2 teaspoons olive oil or vegetable oil
¼ cup sour cream; more for serving
½ chipotle chile in adobo, minced to a paste; more to taste
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 lime, cut into quarters

Heat the oven to 425°F. Put the potatoes on a foil-lined baking sheet, rub them with the oil, and arrange them so they're spaced as far apart as possible. Bake until a skewer or fork slips easily into the center of the potato, 50 to 55 minutes. Set on a rack to cool but leave the oven on.

When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, slice off about the top one-quarter or one-third (lengthwise) of each potato to expose the interior. Peel off and discard the skin from this top section and put the potato flesh in a medium bowl. Use a spoon to scoop out the rest of the flesh of each potato, leaving about ¼ inch of sweet potato attached to the skin to help retain its structure. Put the potato flesh in the bowl.

Beat the sweet potato flesh, sour cream, chile paste, butter, and salt with an electric hand mixer on medium speed just until smooth. Taste and, if you want more heat, mince more chipotle to a paste and add it. Mound the mixture into the potato skins and set them in a baking pan. Bake the stuffed potatoes at 425°F until hot, 20 to 25 minutes. Serve with the lime wedges and more sour cream.

Eva Katz is a recipe developer and food writer who lives in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. ♦

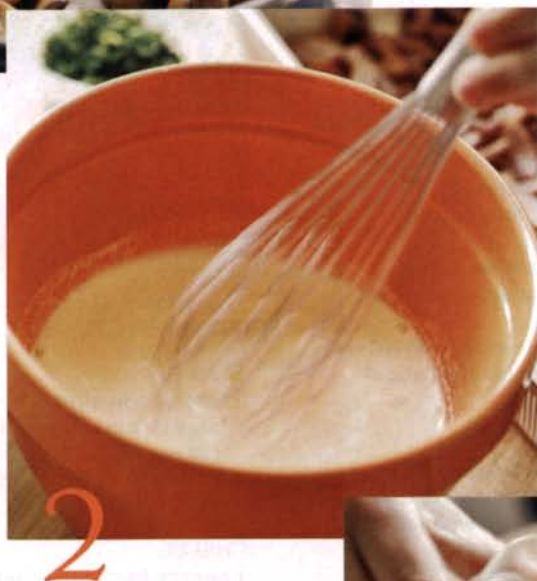


*Ham, Mushrooms
& Chives*

Make a quick batter,
sauté a simple filling,
and you've got
a brand-new trick
for a casual dinner

Tonight, Try a Crustless Quiche

BY RANDALL PRICE



Master Recipe for Savory Clafoutis

Serves six as a main course.

This batter comes together so quickly that I prefer to whisk it by hand at the last moment. That said, you can also mix it in a blender or food processor, make it a day ahead, and refrigerate it. The cornstarch and pepper settle to the bottom after ten minutes, so if you do work ahead, you'll need to rewhisk.

A filling recipe from pp. 52-53

¼ cup cornstarch
1¼ cups whole milk
2 large eggs
2 large egg yolks
1 cup heavy cream
½ teaspoon kosher salt
Pinch cayenne
Butter or oil for the pan

Position a rack in the top third of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F.

1 Prepare the filling: Follow one of the recipes on pp. 52-53.

2 Mix the batter: Put the cornstarch in a medium bowl. Whisking steadily, slowly pour in ½ cup of the milk, mixing until quite smooth. Whisk in the whole eggs and egg yolks, mixing again until smooth, and then gradually whisk in the rest of the milk, the cream, salt, and cayenne. Use immediately or refrigerate, covered, for up to a day.

3 Arrange the filling: Butter or oil a 2-quart, 7x11-inch Pyrex dish or an 8x11-inch ceramic gratin dish. Spread the filling over the bottom of the pan. Scatter on the cheese and herbs.

4 Pour the batter: Whisk the batter in case it has settled and then pour it over the filling. Bake until the top is deep golden and the custard is set (insert a pick in the center to check; it should be softly set, neither liquid nor firm), 25 to 30 minutes. Let stand for 30 minutes before serving.

As a personal chef, I'm always looking for something new and uncomplicated that I can make on a moment's notice. My "crustless quiche" was born on one such day. The inspiration for this savory treat actually comes from a custard-like dessert called clafoutis (clah-foo-TEE), which is a country French specialty. Served warm, a traditional clafoutis is almost like a sweet omelet or fritatta. But take out the sugar and fruit and you have a perfect vehicle for savory morsels to make a light supper dish or warming lunch; a quiche but without the fuss of making pastry crust. The basic batter is a snap to make, and the filling variations are endless.

The batter takes two minutes to mix by hand; it's simply eggs, milk, cream, and cornstarch. The cornstarch makes the

batter especially light, and I add just enough to help the filling set. All-purpose flour works as well, but I find that it makes for a heavier result.

Filling possibilities are endless. I first tried this as a way to dress up leftovers. But a crustless quiche is too good to limit to using up last night's supper. The fillings at right call for items you probably already have in your refrigerator and pantry right now. And the sidebar below right will give you yet more ideas.

The oven temperature is high so you can bake the clafoutis quickly. This, in turn, ensures an airy result. The top will turn deep brown, but take care not to overbake or the custard can begin to separate and turn curdy. Follow the doneness tests in the method on p. 51. When done, the clafoutis will be set but may shimmy slightly in the pan. Like a quiche, this dish needs to sit for 30 minutes before serving so it cools and sets.

Using the right pan is key, but nothing exotic is required. After much testing, I found that this recipe works best in a 2-quart, 7x11-inch Pyrex pan, which is easy to find in supermarkets and hardware stores. Another good option is a ceramic gratin dish; if you have one with those same dimensions, by all means, use it. The pan needs to be shallow enough for the batter to bake through quickly (ideally, the batter will fill the pan about 1½ inches deep). A 2-quart pan of smaller dimensions will be deeper, and the clafoutis won't cook through (the sides will be done while the center is liquid). A pan with larger dimensions will cause the batter to cook through too quickly.

Before dinner, turn on your oven, make one of the fillings, and mix the batter while the oven heats up. Then just toss a big green salad while the clafoutis is baking, add a loaf of crusty bread if you like, and soon after, a warming, casual dinner will be ready to savor.



Shallots & Bacon with Sun-Dried Tomatoes

FILLING:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter or vegetable oil**
- 8 slices bacon (about ¼ pound), cut into ¼-inch strips**
- 4 ounces shallots, finely diced (to yield ¾ cup)**
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar**
- 1 tablespoon balsamic or sherry vinegar**
- 4 oil-packed sun-dried tomato halves, roughly chopped (to yield about ⅓ cup)**

CHEESE:

- ½ pound wedge of Brie or a small Camembert, rind trimmed, cheese cut into ¼-inch-thick wedges**

HERB:

- ¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**

Heat the butter or oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the bacon and shallots and cook, stirring, until they begin to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in the sugar and cook until the bacon and shallots turn deep golden brown, about 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the vinegar. Stir in the sun-dried tomatoes; set aside to cool. Have the cheese and chopped parsley ready.

Three delicious fillings to get you started



Red Bell Peppers with Thyme & Goat Cheese

FILLING:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- 1 large or 2 medium red bell peppers (10 ounces total), cored, seeded, and cut into ¼-inch dice**
- Kosher salt**

CHEESE:

- 4 ounces fresh goat cheese, coarsely crumbled**

HERB:

- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, lightly chopped**

Heat the olive oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the peppers and a generous pinch of salt. Cook, stirring often, until the peppers soften and brown slightly, about 5 minutes. Set aside to cool. Have the goat cheese and chopped thyme ready.

Quick filling ideas

Try mixing one of these fillings (or other leftovers) with a cheese and chopped herb of your choosing:

- ❖ Crumbled browned sausage or bacon.
- ❖ Chopped roasted vegetables.
- ❖ Diced smoked chicken.
- ❖ Sautéed asparagus, broccoli, or cauliflower.
- ❖ Wilted spinach, squeezed to remove excess water.
- ❖ Chopped sun-dried tomatoes, pine nuts, and olives.
- ❖ Flaked poached salmon or diced boiled shrimp.



Ham, Mushrooms & Chives

FILLING:

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
 ½ pound white button mushrooms, wiped clean, stems trimmed, caps quartered (or cut smaller if large)
 Kosher salt
 6 ounces ham, sliced ⅛ inch thick and cut into 1½x½-inch strips
 Freshly ground black pepper

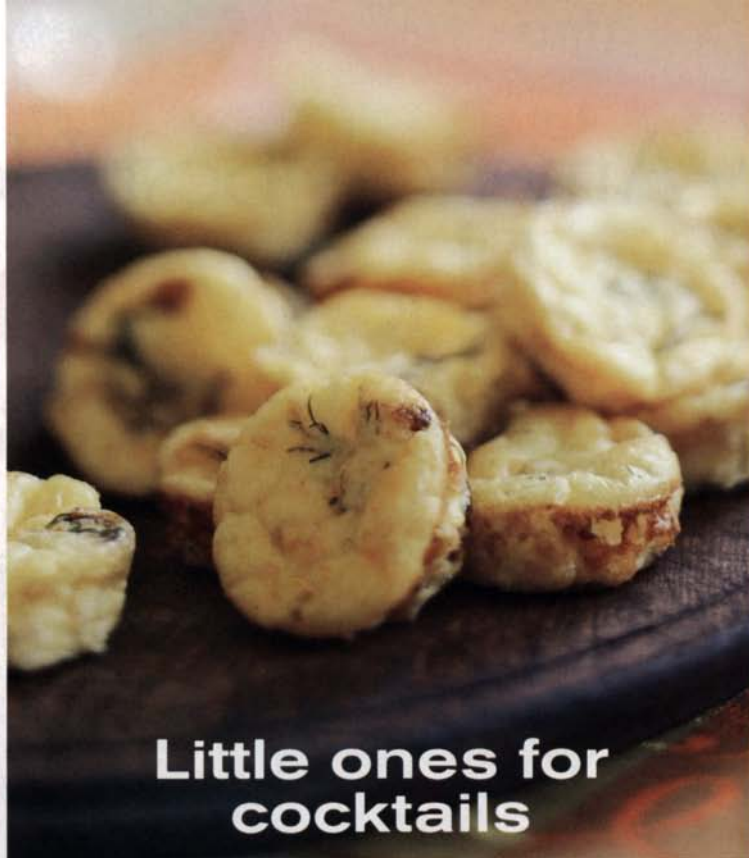
CHEESE:

2 ounces Gruyère, grated (to yield ½ cup)

HERB:

2 tablespoons snipped chives

Heat the oil and butter in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. When the butter has melted, add the mushrooms, sprinkle with salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and browned slightly, about 8 minutes. If the mushrooms release a lot of water, increase the heat to evaporate it. Toss in the ham and cook, stirring frequently, until it has browned a bit, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat, season with a little salt and pepper, and set aside to cool. Have the cheese and snipped chives ready.



Little ones for cocktails

The savory clafoutis (or crustless quiche) batter on p. 51 can be the key to unique nibbles for your next cocktail party. Heat the oven to 450°F. Oil mini muffin tins and put ½ teaspoon grated cheese into each muffin cup, plus an interesting tidbit—half an olive, three tiny cooked cocktail shrimp, ½ teaspoon crisp crumbled bacon, sautéed mushroom, or chopped jalapeño are all good choices. A pinch of chopped fresh dill or basil adds flavor and color. Add 2 tablespoons of the batter to each muffin cup. Bake until the clafoutis puff and start to turn golden, 15 to 18 minutes. Let cool for 20 minutes and then carefully run a paring knife or offset spatula around the rim of each muffin cup. Carefully lift each clafoutis out of its cup. The basic batter will yield about 48 pieces. If you like to work ahead, mini clafoutis can be reheated in a 400°F oven for 5 minutes.

Randall Price is an American chef who lives in France. ♦

America's Best Home Cook

The Winning Recipes

Try these recipes and you'll know why they made the finals in *Fine Cooking's* nationwide contest

BY AMY ALBERT

When *Fine Cooking* decided to hold a cooking contest, we settled on the same "market basket" challenge we often give our authors. Along with our co-sponsor, kitchenware retailer Sur La Table, we put out a call for home cooks to create a recipe for a main dish from a limited number of ingredients (for contest rules, see p. 59). It's the type of challenge that puts a cook's ingenuity and skill to the test—perfect for *Fine Cooking* readers.

More than 600 responses poured in, and the *Fine Cooking* editors and contributing editors read and tested recipes for the first cut. We chose 15 semifinalists to compete last spring at regional cookoffs in Washington, DC, Chicago, and Seattle. At each regional, two finalists were chosen. The six finalists were flown to California for the national finals of our first-ever search for America's Best Home Cook.

On a beautiful June morning in San Francisco, in the kitchens of Sur La Table's downtown store, the cooking began. Despite the pressure, each contestant was as calm and as poised as a seasoned pro in a busy restaurant kitchen. Everyone did well—the

dishes were creative, delicious, and well executed—but only one cook could be awarded the distinction of America's Best Home Cook 2004. Kara Adanian prepared her Rib-Eye Steak Sandwiches (at right) to raves, and took home the grand prize (see www.finecooking.com for details). For more on the sponsors and prizes, see pp. 88-89.

A day of cooking, judging, and celebration, clockwise from top left: preparing for the judges; kitchen bustle; the judges; finalists at the awards party; Kara Adanian, grand-prize winner; finished dishes presented to the judges; whisking a marinade.



Kara Adanalian, Fairfax, California

Rib-Eye Steak Sandwiches

Serves four.

Pugliese is an Italian country bread with a very crisp crust and a soft interior; a good substitute is ciabatta or another artisan Italian loaf. Cambozola is like a cross between Camembert and Gorgonzola—it has a white rind and a creamy, blue-streaked interior.

4 rib-eye steaks, each ½ inch thick, trimmed
5 cloves garlic, minced; plus 2 cloves, sliced
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 shallots, minced
16 medium cremini mushrooms (about 8 ounces), sliced
¼ cup sweet Marsala
1 medium onion, sliced
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
4 to 6 ounces Cambozola cheese, rind removed (or creamy Gorgonzola)
8 slices (½-inch thick) pugliese-style bread, lightly toasted
1½ tablespoons Dijon mustard

Cut each steak in half crosswise. In a small bowl, combine 4 cloves of the minced garlic, the rosemary, 1½ teaspoons salt, and pepper to taste. Rub all over the steaks.

In a 12-inch skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the butter over medium-high heat. Add the shallots and remaining minced garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the mushrooms and Marsala; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until the mushrooms cook through and the liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Add 1 tablespoon butter to the pan. Add the onions, season with salt and pepper, and sauté over medium-high heat until browned but still crunchy, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the sliced garlic and cook until it begins to brown, about 1 minute. Transfer to the bowl with the mushrooms.

Add the oil and remaining 1 tablespoon butter to the pan over high heat. In two batches, sear the steaks until well browned, about 2 minutes per side for medium.

To serve, stir the Cambozola in a small bowl until spreadable. Put two pieces of the toasted bread on each of four plates; spread lightly with the mustard and some of the Cambozola. Set a piece of steak on top of each toast and drizzle with any accumulated juice. Return the mushroom mixture to the pan to reheat briefly. Top each steak with some of the mushrooms and a dollop of Cambozola and serve.



This recipe is similar to a dish Kara often makes for family and friends. So when she got word of the America's Best Home Cook challenge, she set to work adapting her recipe to fit the criteria.



Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons unsalted butter; more for the soufflé dishes
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
4 large egg yolks
1 cup (about 4 ounces) crumbled goat cheese (preferably Bucheron, rind trimmed)
6 large egg whites

Heat the oven to 400°F. Butter six 9- to 10-ounce soufflé dishes. In a small saucepan, heat the cream with the rosemary sprig over medium heat just until it boils. Remove from the heat and let steep for 10 minutes. Discard the rosemary sprig.

Heat the olive oil in a 10- to 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the red peppers and shallot. Sauté, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to soften, about 6 minutes. Add the mushrooms and continue to sauté, stirring frequently, until everything is tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper; remove from the heat. Distribute the cooked vegetables evenly among the buttered dishes, covering the bottom of each dish.

Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. When foamy, stir in the flour and cook over low heat, stirring constantly, for 2 to 3 minutes. Whisk in the heated cream. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt (or to taste) and several grinds of pepper. Increase the heat to medium and whisk until the mixture bubbles and thickens. Remove from the heat. Whisk in the egg yolks one at a time until well blended. Stir in the cheese (the mixture needn't be completely smooth).

With a mixer, beat the egg whites in a large bowl with a pinch of salt on high speed until medium-stiff peaks form. Stir a small amount of the beaten egg whites into the cheese mixture to lighten it and then gently fold the cheese mixture into the remaining egg whites with a rubber spatula (it's fine to leave a few clumps of egg white). Divide the mixture evenly among the buttered dishes, covering the vegetables.

Lower the oven temperature to 375°F. Put the soufflés on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until golden and just slightly wobbly in the center, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle the soufflés with a bit of chopped rosemary and serve immediately.

Nancy omitted the beef and created a light, fluffy soufflé with loft and rich flavor.

Nancy Wiese, Plano, Texas

Goat Cheese Soufflé with Red Peppers & Chanterelles

Serves six.

Bucheron is an aged goat cheese with a white rind. If you can't find it, use a fresh, soft goat cheese.

1½ cups heavy cream
1 small sprig fresh rosemary; more chopped rosemary for garnish
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 medium red bell peppers, cored, seeded, and finely chopped
1 medium shallot, finely chopped
1 cup finely chopped fresh chanterelle mushrooms (about 2 ounces)



Wendy McMahon,
 Leesburg, Virginia

Mediterranean Beef Wraps with Roasted Red Peppers

Serves eight.

¼ cup balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh rosemary
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
2 shallots, minced
1 clove garlic, minced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon olive oil
2-pound flank steak
2 large red bell peppers
8 pocketless 7- or 8-inch-diameter pita flatbreads
1 medium red onion, thinly sliced
4½ ounces feta, crumbled (1 cup)
1 cup fresh baby spinach

Start a medium-hot grill fire. In a small bowl, combine the vinegar, rosemary, mustard, sugar, shallots, garlic, and 1 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Whisk in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the oil in a steady stream until emulsified. Put the flank steak and half of the marinade (about $\frac{2}{3}$ cup) in a plastic bag, seal, and refrigerate for 30 to 60 minutes. (Reserve the remaining marinade for drizzling on the pitas.)

Drizzle the peppers with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and grill until blackened all over, 10 to 15 minutes. Put the peppers in a small bowl, cover immediately with plastic wrap, and let steam and cool.

Remove the steak from the marinade and pat dry. Sprinkle with 2 teaspoons each salt and pepper. Grill the steak, 6 to 7 minutes on each side for medium rare (a thermometer inserted in the thick-



"I entertain a lot and invite way more people than can fit at my dining table," says Wendy. "This dish works well buffet-style."

est part of the steak should register 135° to 140°F). Remove from the grill, cover with foil, and let rest for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, core, seed, and peel the cooled peppers and slice them into thin strips. Strain the reserved marinade through a fine sieve. Warm the pitas on the grill, flipping once after 2 minutes, about 4 minutes total. Transfer to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm.

To assemble, slice the steak thinly on an angle across the grain. Put a few slices of beef and some of the roasted red peppers, red onion, spinach, and feta on each pita. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the strained marinade and fold.

Janice Elder, Charlotte, North Carolina

Stuffed Filet Mignon with Mushroom-Gorgonzola Grits

Serves four.

- ½ pound Gorgonzola, crumbled (about 2 cups)**
- ¼ cup chopped roasted red bell peppers (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 80); more for garnish**
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary**
- 4 filet mignons (6 ounces each)**
- 6 thin slices prosciutto**
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 large shallots, finely chopped**
- 3 cups assorted sliced mushrooms (such as shiitake, cremini, and portabella)**
- 2 cans (14 ounces each) low-salt chicken broth**
- 1 cup quick grits (not instant)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- Fresh rosemary sprigs for garnish (optional)**

Mix half of the Gorgonzola with the roasted red peppers and chopped rosemary, mixing well. Use a small knife to cut a slit about 2 inches long into the side of each filet and cut about 2 inches in to create a pocket. Stand the filets on their uncured edges and open the pockets. Using a small spoon, fill each pocket with a quarter of the Gorgonzola mixture. Wrap one slice of the prosciutto around the edge of each filet to seal the pocket, securing with a wooden pick if necessary. Cover and set aside at room temperature.

Cut the remaining 2 slices of the prosciutto crosswise into ¼-inch strips. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in 3- to 4-quart saucepan over medium-high heat. Sauté the prosciutto, stirring occasionally, until crisp and golden, about 3 minutes. Transfer it with a slotted spoon to a plate lined with paper towels.

Add the garlic and shallots to the saucepan and cook until softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender and beginning to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the chicken broth and grits, stirring well. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to low. Simmer, covered, stirring frequently, until the grits begin to thicken, about 5 minutes. Keep warm over low heat.



"I'm from the South, so I made grits," Janice told the judges. "But in case you don't like grits," she quipped, "I've garnished them with a filet mignon."



Season the filets with salt and pepper. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a heavy 10- to 12-inch skillet (cast iron works well) over high heat. When the oil is hot, cook the filets until rare (about 3 minutes per side) or medium rare (about 4 minutes per side) or to the doneness you prefer. While the filets are cooking, add the remaining Gorgonzola to the grits; stir until well blended. If the grits seem too thick, thin them with a little water. Season to taste.

To serve, divide the grits among four shallow soup bowls. Top each with a stuffed filet (remove the wooden picks, if used) and sprinkle the grits with some of the crisped prosciutto. Garnish with the rosemary sprigs and roasted red peppers, if you like, and serve immediately.

Kate Lynn, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Savory Mediterranean Baklava

Serves eight.

Look for Athens brand phyllo twin packs (two 8-ounce packs in one box). The phyllo sheets are the perfect size for this dish. The components can be made a day ahead and refrigerated. Wait to assemble the baklava until you're ready to bake it.

FOR THE MUSHROOM LAYER:

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 2 tablespoons finely minced shallot**
- ½ cup finely diced sweet onion**
- 4 cups roughly chopped assorted fresh mushrooms (chanterelle, oyster, portabella, cremini, hedgehog, shiitake, or white button; about 1 pound)**
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary**
- ½ cup low-salt vegetable or chicken broth**
- ¼ cup dry white wine (optional)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

FOR THE RED PEPPER LAYER:

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 3 large red bell peppers, cut into ¼-inch dice (about 3 cups)**
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced**
- 1 cup finely diced red onion (about ½ medium red onion)**
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

FOR THE GOAT CHEESE LAYER:

- 20 to 22 ounces good-quality goat cheese (I like Laura Chenel)**
- 2 large eggs**
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream**
- 1 tablespoon finely minced rosemary**
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**

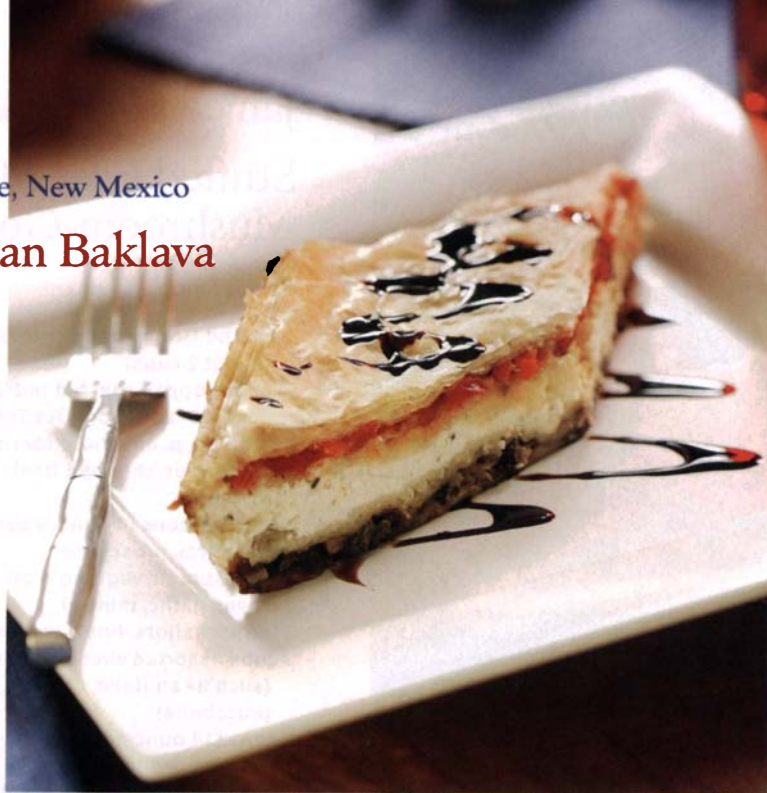
FOR THE BALSAMIC-ROSEMARY SYRUP:

- 2 cups balsamic vinegar**
- 2- to 3-inch-long sprig fresh rosemary; more sprigs for garnish**

- 1 pound 9x14-inch frozen phyllo dough, thawed in the refrigerator overnight**

- ½ pound unsalted butter, melted; more as needed**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.



Make the mushroom layer: Melt the butter in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the shallot and onion; cook until softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms, rosemary, broth, and wine if using; season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook until the mushrooms are tender and most of the liquid has evaporated, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool.

Make the red pepper layer: Heat the oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the peppers, garlic, onion, and rosemary. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook, stirring often, until the peppers and onions are well softened, 7 to 10 minutes. Don't let them brown; add more oil if the pan is dry. Let cool.

Make the goat cheese layer: In a food processor or with an electric mixer, blend the goat cheese, eggs, cream, rosemary, pepper, and salt until smooth. Set aside.

Make the balsamic-rosemary syrup: In a medium saucepan, bring the vinegar and rosemary to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook until reduced to a thin syrupy consistency, about 15 minutes. Watch closely during the last few minutes of cooking. (The reduction goes fast at the end and if you overreduce it, it may be too thick or even burn. It will thicken more as it cools.) You should have about ½ cup syrup. Remove from the heat; discard the rosemary.

To assemble: Unroll the phyllo; keep it covered with plastic wrap and a damp cloth. Liberally brush the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish with some of the melted butter. Lay a sheet of phyllo in the dish and, starting from the edges, brush lightly with butter. Repeat with seven more sheets, brushing each with butter.

With a rubber spatula, spread the mushrooms evenly over the phyllo. Repeat the layering and buttering with eight more sheets of phyllo. Spread the goat cheese evenly over the phyllo. Repeat the layering and buttering with eight more sheets of phyllo. Spread the red peppers evenly over the phyllo. Top with eight more phyllo sheets, buttering as you go. Butter the top two sheets as evenly as possible.

With a sharp knife, cut the baklava lengthwise into thirds, cutting all the way to the bottom of the pan, holding the top layers of phyllo in place with your fingers. Next, cut diagonally from one corner to another. Continue making diagonal cuts about 2 inches apart to create 2x3-inch diamonds. Bake until deep golden brown, 40 to 50 minutes. Let rest for at least 15 to 20 minutes.

To serve: Drizzle a little of the syrup on each plate. Arrange one or two pieces of the baklava on each plate, drizzle with a bit more syrup, and garnish with a rosemary sprig.



This recipe, Kate laughingly admits, suits her extended family's dietary needs, including vegetarian and kosher. But it's a hit with meat-eaters, too.

Karen Tedesco, St. Louis, Missouri

Warm Steak Salad with Rosemary Flatbread

Serves six.

2 New York strip steaks, 1½ inches thick (about 1 pound each), trimmed
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon coarsely ground black pepper
½ teaspoon kosher salt

FOR THE FLATBREAD:

13½ ounces (3 cups) all-purpose flour; more for kneading
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil

FOR THE DRESSING:

4 whole shallots, unpeeled
4 whole cloves garlic, unpeeled
¼ cup plus 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
3 red bell peppers, roasted, skinned, and seeded (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 80)
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
2 teaspoons red-wine vinegar
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SALAD:

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
3½ cups cooked chickpeas (or two 15-ounce cans, rinsed and drained)
2 cups lightly packed baby arugula (about 2 ounces)
4 to 5 ounces coarsely crumbled ricotta salata (1 cup)

Rub the steaks on both sides with the oil, pepper, and salt. Cover and let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes or in the refrigerator for up to 4 hours. (Remove the steaks from the refrigerator 30 minutes before cooking.)

Make the flatbread dough: In a large bowl, mix the flour, salt, and rosemary. Stir in 1¼ cups water and the oil until the dough comes together. Turn onto a lightly floured surface; knead until smooth and resilient, about 5 minutes, dusting the surface lightly with flour as needed. Put the dough in an oiled bowl, cover with plastic, and let rest at room temperature for 30 minutes or in the refrigerator for up to 2 hours.

Make the dressing: Heat the oven to 400°F. Put the shallots and garlic in a small baking dish; drizzle with 1 teaspoon of the oil. Roast until soft and fragrant, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool slightly and peel. Put the shallots, garlic, red peppers, mustard, vinegars, salt, and several grinds of pepper in a food processor. Process for 10 seconds. With the machine on, add the remaining ¼ cup oil in a slow, steady stream until the mixture is thick and smooth.

Cook the flatbreads: Heat a 10- to 12-inch cast-iron or other heavy skillet over medium heat until a drop of water evaporates on contact. Meanwhile, on a lightly floured surface, divide the flatbread dough into six pieces. Roll one piece into an 8-inch round and put the round in the skillet. Cook until golden-brown spots appear on the bottom and the bread begins to puff, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip the bread, cook until golden-brown spots appear on the second side, and transfer to a plate. Repeat with remaining dough. Cover the flatbreads with a towel to keep warm.

Make the salad: Increase the heat to medium-high and let the skillet heat for 1 minute. Cook the steaks to medium rare (about 5 minutes per side) or to the doneness you prefer. Remove the skillet from the heat, transfer the steaks to a cutting board, and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Slice about ⅛ inch thick.

While the steaks rest, let the skillet cool for 2 to 3 minutes. Set the skillet over medium-low heat and add 2 tablespoons oil. Add the chopped garlic and cook, stirring frequently, until softened; don't let it brown. Remove the pan from the heat; add the chickpeas, arugula, and ricotta salata and toss gently.

To serve: Put a flatbread on each plate, spoon on a generous ½ cup of the chickpea mixture, and drizzle with about 2 tablespoons of the dressing. Arrange the sliced steak on the salad. Fold the flatbread over to eat like a sandwich or use a fork and knife. Pass the extra dressing at the table.



"I love the sweet smokiness of roasted red peppers," says Karen. "I decided to combine them with shallots, which I roasted as well, for added savory richness."



CONTEST GUIDELINES

Market basket ingredients were boneless beef, fresh or dried mushrooms, red bell peppers, shallots, and fresh rosemary. Contestants were allowed to omit one market basket ingredient. They could use three additional wildcard ingredients, and they could also use any number of ingredients from a standard, limited cook's pantry.

Amy Albert is Fine Cooking's senior editor. ♦

The Fastest Chicken Soup in the East

Coconut milk and tangy herbs make this simple Thai classic taste deceptively complex

BY NANCIE McDERMOTT

I fell in love with chicken coconut soup soon after I arrived in Thailand as a Peace Corps volunteer. Its flavors were unfamiliar yet inviting, as if all my early impressions of Thailand had been simmered up and ladled into a bowl.

Though I spent my time in Thailand eating Thai food rather than learning to cook it, when I returned home to North Carolina, I was able to make a delicious pot of *tome kha gai* (chicken coconut soup) on my very first try with ingredients I tracked down at a small Korean market. Nowadays, you can find Thai ingredients like coconut milk, fish sauce, fresh lemongrass, and jasmine rice at supermarkets; and Asian markets often carry fresh or frozen lime leaves and galangal; for sources, see p. 90.

The defining flavor of this soup is galangal, known in Thai as *kha*. For this recipe, you can use this

fibrous, intensely flavored rhizome in several different forms: fresh, frozen (whole or sliced), or sliced and dried into humble-looking woody chips. All three forms deliver galangal's intense, citrusy tang. Ground dried galangal, however, does not, so please don't use it in this soup. If you can't find galangal, use its cousin, fresh ginger. The flavor will be different, but still delicious. And if you can't find lemongrass or lime leaves, *my ben lai*—"Don't worry!" They add magic, but even without them, you'll still have a delicious soup. That's how I made it the first ten years after returning from Thailand, because fresh Thai herbs were difficult to find during that time.

Making the soup is a snap. There are no new techniques to master. It's a simple matter of prepping the ingredients, boiling, stirring, and simmering.

I usually serve the soup Thai style, leaving the lemongrass, galangal, and lime leaves floating in the



Galangal, a relative of ginger, gives this soup a bright, citrusy flavor.

Chicken Coconut Soup (Tome Kha Gai)

Yields 4¾ to 5 cups; serves four as a starter or two as a light meal.

This soup is a treasure: a quintessentially Thai dish that you can make at home simply, quickly, and with great success.

- 2 stalks fresh lemongrass**
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice**
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce (nam pla)**
- 2 scallions (white and green parts), trimmed and very thinly sliced crosswise**
- 6 fresh or frozen wild lime leaves (also known as kaffir lime leaves; see p. 24), torn or cut into quarters**
- 10 to 12 thin slices galangal, fresh, frozen, or dried (or 10 to 12 thin slices fresh unpeeled ginger)**
- 8 to 10 fresh hot red and green Thai chiles, stemmed and lightly pressed with the side of a knife (or 3 or 4 serranos, thinly sliced) for garnish (optional)**
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh cilantro**
- 1 boneless chicken breast half (about 6 ounces), cut into bite-size chunks or sliced across the grain into strips**
- ¼ pound white mushrooms, cleaned, stems trimmed, and thinly sliced to yield 1 cup**
- 14-ounce can unsweetened coconut milk (shake the can before opening it)**
- 14-ounce can low-salt chicken broth or 1¾ cups water**

To make the soup, follow the directions starting above right.

broth. But if you're having guests and don't want to ask them to eat around those items, you can remove them before serving the soup. Just scoop the solid ingredients into a large wire strainer held over the soup pot, fish out the galangal and lemongrass, and then return the chicken and mushrooms to the broth.

Many of my friends think that all Thai dishes are hot, but that isn't true. This soup, for example, isn't spicy-hot, though it would be served along with an array of spicier dishes and jasmine rice. To oblige my chilehead friends, I put a dish of tiny hot Thai chiles, stemmed and lightly pressed with the side of a knife, on the table. When added whole to the finished soup, they add a welcome burst of color and a blast of heat, too.



1 Trim away and discard the root end and the top 3 inches of each stalk of lemongrass, along with any brittle leaves. Pound each stalk lightly with the spine of a cleaver or an unopened can. Cut each stalk crosswise into 2-inch lengths and set aside.



3 In a medium saucepan, combine the coconut milk and broth. Bring to a gentle boil over medium-high heat. Stir in the galangal, lemongrass, and lime leaves. Add the chicken and mushrooms. Return to a gentle boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for 10 minutes to infuse the flavors and cook the chicken.

4 Remove the pan from the heat, pour the hot soup over the seasonings in the serving bowl, and stir well. Sprinkle with the chopped cilantro and serve hot. Pass around the chiles for those who want them.

Follow these 4 easy steps



2 In a large serving bowl, combine the lime juice, fish sauce, scallions, and half of the wild lime leaves. Set the bowl by the stove, along with small dishes containing the galangal, lemongrass, and remaining lime leaves; the chiles (if using), the chopped cilantro; and the sliced chicken and mushrooms.



Apple desserts with

A sweet, buttery crunch gives
a lift to four comforting classics

BY WENDY KALEN

If you like apple desserts—and who doesn't?—you'll love the crisp, pie, cake, and bars on these pages. They've got all the comforting, satisfying flavors that make these types of desserts such favorites, plus one thing more: They all feature easy crumb toppings, which are the crowning touch for just about anything apple. The tenderness of cooked apples practically cries out for the contrast of a crisp-crunchy top. And flavorwise, too, toppings made with brown sugar and butter (and perhaps spiked with cinnamon or nuts) marry beautifully with apples.

Toppings are flexible

The crumb toppings for the following desserts are all slightly different from one another, but they have one very important thing in common: They're a cinch to make. For three of them, you don't even need a mixer to combine the ingredients, just a bowl and your fingers. Depending on the proportions of the three main ingredients—flour, butter, and sugar—and on how well you blend them, the topping might be crunchier, coarser, or sandier (see the sidebar at far right).

A crumb topping is a versatile creature. Sometimes I make a little extra and bake it separately on a sheet pan. It keeps its crunch for a few weeks in an airtight container (or longer in the freezer), and it's fun to sprinkle on ice-cream sundaes, crush and press into the sides of a frosted cake, or add to your favorite granola mix. You can also mix it into homemade applesauce and add a dollop of crème fraîche for a quick apple compote. Or just munch on it as a snack.

A quick note about apples: I love all kinds and often experiment with different varieties. But some apples break down faster than others when they're cooked (see *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 78), so be aware that cooking times can vary. I like the consistency of results that I get when baking with Braeburns, and I like the way they get tender without falling apart. Also, apples behave differently at different times of year due to moisture loss, so you might find that desserts like crisps and pies may end up slightly more or less juicy depending on the season.





easy crumb toppings

Experiment with crumb toppings

One of the great things about crumb toppings is that they're flexible and forgiving. By tweaking the proportions, you can vary the texture and size of the crumb. And if you tend toward imprecision when measuring, crumb toppings are for you: The result might be a little less crisp or less crumbly than

intended, but it will still be delicious. Above are my ideal proportions for a basic crumb topping (I use it in the crisp on p. 64), and below are tips to modify it to achieve a different texture.

Basic recipe:

5³/₄ ounces (1¹/₄ cups)
all-purpose flour

¹/₄ pound (¹/₂ cup) unsalted
butter

¹/₂ cup firmly packed light
brown sugar

2 tablespoons granulated
sugar

¹/₄ teaspoon table salt

Crunchier

Adding confectioners' sugar in addition to the other sugars provides more crunch and also causes the mixture to spread a bit for a more classic coffee cake look. Melting the butter produces a similar effect. Increasing the brown sugar adds crunch and also delivers a deeper, caramelized flavor.

Smoother

To encourage the topping to spread together rather than remain pebbly and separate, try any of the following: add more butter, use melted butter, or bake at a higher temperature. All of these changes lead to a crumb topping that tends more to one unified layer than lots of individual clumps.

Coarser

For larger lumps, the simplest approach is to blend the mixture very thoroughly; the more you work it between your fingers, the more it will clump together into larger pieces. You can also use a little less flour or boost the amount of brown sugar.

Sandier

Three changes can help produce a finer, sandier texture: don't blend the mixture too thoroughly, use more flour, or reverse the proportions of granulated sugar to brown sugar. If you replace all of the brown sugar with granulated sugar, the topping will be extra tender, too.



great with
vanilla ice cream

Apple Cranberry Crisp

Serves six to eight.

3 pounds apples (4 to 5 medium-large), such as Braeburn, Gala, Rome, or Honeycrisp

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ pound (2¼ cups) fresh cranberries

1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

3 tablespoons fresh orange juice

Pinch table salt

1 cup granulated sugar

Pecan Topping (recipe above right)

Heat the oven to 375°F. Butter the sides only of a 9-inch-square baking pan.

Peel, quarter, and core the apples. Cut each apple quarter crosswise into ¾-inch-thick slices. Put them in a large bowl, sprinkle on the cinnamon, and toss until evenly coated. Combine the cranberries and orange zest in a food processor and pulse until the cranberries are finely chopped, scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula as needed.

Add the cranberries to the apples and toss to combine. Put the butter, orange juice, and salt in a small microwaveable dish or

a small pan. Heat in the microwave or over medium-low heat until the butter melts, about 1 minute. Swirl to blend and pour the mixture over the apples. Toss to coat. Add the sugar and toss to coat again. Pour the apple mixture into the prepared pan and spread it evenly. Sprinkle the topping evenly on top of the apples.

Line a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet with foil. Set the pan on the sheet and bake until the juices are bubbling on the sides, the top is golden brown, crisp, and hard, and the apples in the center are tender when pierced with a fork, 60 to 70 minutes (rotate the pan for even browning, if necessary). If the top starts to get too brown after 45 minutes, cover it loosely with aluminum foil. Let cool on a rack for at least 30 minutes to let the juices thicken. Serve warm.

Pecan Topping

Yields enough for the Apple Cranberry Crisp below.

5¾ ounces (1¼ cups)

all-purpose flour

½ cup firmly packed

light brown sugar

2 tablespoons granulated sugar

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon table salt

¼ pound (½ cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces

3 ounces (¾ cup) pecans, coarsely chopped

Combine the flour, brown sugar, granulated sugar, cinnamon, and salt in a medium bowl. Rub in the butter with your fingertips until it's well blended and the mixture is clumpy but still a bit crumbly (it should hold together if you pinch it). Mix in the pecans. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Using a combination of apple varieties delivers an unexpected range of textures and tart-sweet flavors.



Ginger Apple Crumb Pie

Serves eight to twelve.

FOR THE CRUST:

5¾ ounces (1¼ cups) all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon table salt
1½ ounces (3 tablespoons) cold vegetable shortening, cut into ½-inch dice
1½ ounces (3 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch dice
2½ to 3½ tablespoons very cold water

FOR THE FILLING:

3 pounds Braeburn or Gala apples (about 6 medium) peeled, cored, and cut into ¼-inch-thick slices
2 teaspoons finely grated fresh ginger (I use a Microplane)
½ cup granulated sugar
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 ounce (2 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cut into very small pieces

Ginger Topping (recipe above right)

Make the crust: In a stand mixer bowl (or a large mixing bowl), whisk the flour and salt to blend. Add the shortening and butter. Starting on low speed and then shifting to medium, beat with the paddle attachment (or cut in by hand) until the largest pieces of fat are about the size of peas, 1 to 2 minutes. With the mixer running on low (or mixing by hand), sprinkle on 2½ tablespoons of the water and blend until the dough just comes together into clumps; if the dough is too dry to do this, add the remaining water ½ tablespoon at a time. With your hands, shape the dough into a 4-inch wide disk. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Roll out the dough between two sheets of plastic wrap. (If the dough was chilled for more than 30 minutes, you may need to let it warm up at room temperature to become pliable.) Occasionally loosen and reapply the wrap and continue rolling until you have an 11- to 12-inch round that's about ⅛ inch thick. Remove the top sheet of plastic. Turn a standard 9-inch metal or glass pie plate

(1¼ inches deep) upside down over the center of dough. Slip your hand under the plastic and turn the pie plate right side up. Slip the dough into the pan to fit snugly and carefully remove the plastic. Trim the dough overhang to about ¼ inch, fold it under to create a thicker edge, and flute the edge. Cover loosely with plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or until ready to use.

Position an oven rack in the lower third of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F.

Make the filling: In a large bowl, toss the apples with the ginger, distributing the ginger as evenly as possible. Add the sugar and flour and toss to coat evenly.

Scrape the apple mixture into the shell and mound it slightly in the center. Dot with the butter. Top with the crumb topping, keeping it as clumpy (not sandy) as you can. Try to cover all the apples. If any crumbs roll off the pie, gather them up and reapply.

Put the pie on a foil-lined baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes and then reduce the heat to 375°F. Bake until the apples are tender (a skewer inserted into the center of the pie will meet slight resistance) and the juices are bubbling around the edges, another 30 to 35 minutes; if the top starts to brown too quickly after about 20 minutes, cover the pie lightly with foil. Let cool on a rack for 3 to 4 hours to let the juices set.

Ginger Topping

Yields enough for the Ginger Apple Crumb Pie below.

4½ ounces (1 cup) all-purpose flour
⅓ cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
1½ teaspoons ground ginger
⅛ teaspoon table salt
¼ pound (½ cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, sugar, brown sugar, ground ginger, and salt. Whisk to blend. Add the butter and work it in well with your fingers until the mixture holds together in small clumps and there are very few fine grains left in the bowl. Refrigerate until ready to use.

The size of the crumb is a function of how thoroughly you mix—the more you work it, the clumpier it gets.



Cutting cold butter into pieces makes it easier to blend in.



Rub the mixture between your fingertips until it comes together in small clumps.



As you cover the pie, keep the topping as clumpy as possible for the most satisfying texture.



just right for breakfast
or a snack

Applesauce makes this
cake wonderfully moist.
Homemade is best, but
store-bought is good, too.

Moist Apple-Walnut Cake

Serves sixteen.

9 ounces (2 cups) all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon table salt
3 ounces (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter,
softened at room temperature
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups granulated sugar
2 large eggs, at room temperature
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup smooth homemade or store-bought
applesauce
1 cup sour cream
Walnut Topping (recipe above right)

Heat the oven to 350°F. Butter the bottom and sides of a 9x13-inch baking pan. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment and butter the parchment.

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt to blend.

Combine the butter and sugar in a large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until combined (but not fluffy), scraping the bowl as needed, about 30 seconds.

Add the eggs, one at a time, beating until combined and scraping the bowl as needed.

Add about one-third of the flour mixture, mixing on medium low until combined. Add the applesauce, mixing on medium low until incorporated and scraping the bowl as needed. Mix in another third of the flour mixture, then the sour cream, and then the remaining flour mixture, mixing after each addition until just incorporated. Don't over-mix. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and spread it evenly.

Bake until the edges of the cake are slightly set and the rest is very jiggly, about 15 minutes. Scatter the walnut topping evenly over the cake and bake until the crumbs are golden brown, the center of the cake springs back when lightly touched, and a toothpick inserted in the center has a few moist crumbs sticking to it, 30 to 35 minutes; check the cake early and if the crumbs are golden but the cake isn't fully baked, cover loosely with foil. Let cool on a rack for at least 20 minutes. Serve warm.

Walnut Topping

Yields enough for the Moist Apple-Walnut Cake below.

$\frac{1}{4}$ pound ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) unsalted butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons ground cinnamon
 $4\frac{1}{2}$ ounces (1 cup) all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup confectioners' sugar
4 ounces (1 cup) whole walnuts, coarsely chopped

Melt the butter in a medium bowl in the microwave (or in a skillet and pour into a medium bowl). Add the brown sugar, granulated sugar, and the cinnamon and stir until blended. Add the flour, confectioners' sugar, and the walnuts, mixing with your fingers until it's well combined; the mixture should be crumbly but also clump together. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Almond Cheesecake Apple Bars

Yields sixteen 2½-inch squares.

FOR THE CRUST AND TOPPING:

6½ ounces (1¼ cups plus 2 tablespoons)

all-purpose flour

¼ teaspoon table salt

2 ounces (¼ cup) unsalted butter, well softened

2 ounces (¼ cup) cream cheese, well softened

¼ teaspoon pure almond extract

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar

3 ounces (¾ cup) slivered almonds, coarsely chopped

FOR THE FILLING:

4 ounces (½ cup) cream cheese, softened

½ cup granulated sugar

1 large egg, at room temperature

2 teaspoons freshly grated lemon zest

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Pinch table salt

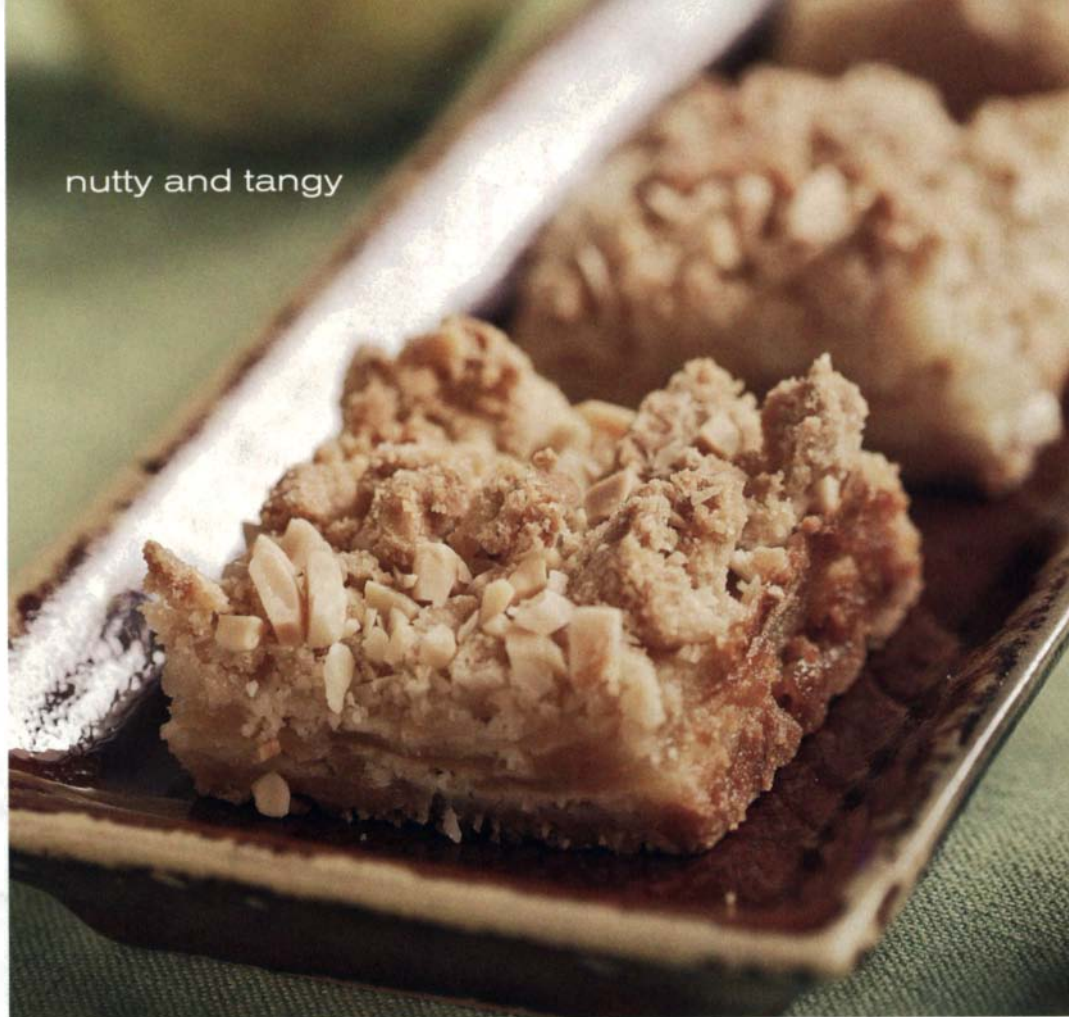
1 pound (about 2 medium) Braeburn, Gala, or Rome apples, peeled, cored and cut into ⅛-inch-thick slices (to yield 2½ cups)

Heat the oven to 350°F. Cut a piece of parchment into a 9x14-inch rectangle. Line a 9-inch-square baking pan with the parchment (it will extend beyond the pan). Butter the parchment and the unlined sides of the pan.

Make the crust and topping: Set aside 2 tablespoons of the flour in a small dish. Whisk together the remaining 1¼ cups flour and the salt in a small bowl. In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Add the cream cheese and almond extract and beat on medium until smooth, scraping the bowl as needed, about 1 minute. Add ¼ cup each of the granulated and brown sugars and beat on medium speed until blended, scraping as needed. Add the flour-salt mixture and ⅓ cup of the almonds and beat on medium low just until the flour is absorbed and the mixture starts to come together in clumps.

Set aside ⅔ cup of the dough in another bowl and press the remaining dough into the prepared pan in a thin but even layer. Prick it all over with a fork. Bake until the crust is golden, especially around the edges, 18 to 20 minutes. Remove from the oven but keep the oven on.

While the crust bakes, add the 2 tablespoons reserved flour and the remaining 2 tablespoons each of the granulated and brown sugars to the reserved dough. Mix with your fingertips until well combined



and then squeeze the dough together into one clump.

Make the filling: In a large mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Add the sugar and beat on medium until combined, scraping the bowl as needed. Add the egg and beat until combined, scraping the bowl as needed. Beat in the lemon zest, lemon juice, and salt.

Spread the apple slices evenly on the bottom crust and pour the cream cheese filling on top, gently spreading it with a rubber spatula to cover the apples. Crumble the remaining dough on top. The pieces can be fairly large, about the size of a cherry, and the topping needn't completely cover the filling. Sprinkle with the remaining almonds. Bake until the topping and almonds are light golden brown, 45 to 50 minutes. Let the bars cool in the pan until warm, about 30 minutes. Remove from the pan using the parchment sling and set on a wire rack to cool completely. Transfer the bars, still on the parchment, to a cutting board. Slide a long metal spatula between the bars and parchment to separate them, and then slide the parchment out. Cut into 16 bars.

Cream cheese and lemon juice give these bars that classic cheesecake tang and texture.

Wendy Kalen is a food writer, food stylist, and recipe developer. She lives in Maplewood, New Jersey. ♦

Getting What You

Shopping for a new range?

Here are our top picks in
30-inch models

With so many models and options from which to choose, buying a range can seem a bit daunting. Although less expensive than a big-ticket item like, say, a new car, buying a range is just as exciting—or maybe even more for those of us who love to cook. But there's a lot to think about before you make a decision and plunk down the dough: how you cook, what you cook, how your kitchen is laid out, and what you want to spend. You want to be sure you make the right choice.

After a lot of footwork (see *How We Tested*, at far right), we've come up with some recommendations to help you decide. Here, in ascending order of price, are the seven 30-inch ranges we'd most love to own. The models that follow made the cut because of the total package they offer: top performance, smart features, good value, and good looks. Some are loaded with nifty details at a nice price. Others have unique features that make cooking more convenient or more fun. Others are just plain powerful and impressively built. Depending on what you're after, there's a good bet in a range of prices. And although we've focused on 30-inch ranges (the standard size if you're replacing one), most models are also available in 36-, 48-, and even 60-inch configurations if you're in the market for something bigger. For a list of manufacturers, see p. 73.

Sleek & simple,
nice price

Bosch all-gas or dual-fuel range

Model: HG or HD (complete model numbers depend on color and options)

Burners: 400 to 15,000 Btu

Price range: \$1,100 to \$1,900

This range is a new offering for Bosch, a company known for dishwashers and ovens. Its new freestanding range caught our attention because of its simple, sleek design, as well as for all the features it offers at a reasonable price.

What's to love:

- ❖ Simple, streamlined control-panel design.
- ❖ Generously sized oven cavity.
- ❖ Electric cooktop models have a removable magnetic control knob for easy cleaning. It's designed for extra safety, too: Burners automatically go off as soon as you remove the knob.
- ❖ Warming drawer.

Shortcomings:

- ❖ Control panel is so streamlined that menu choices aren't immediately evident and take a little getting used to.
- ❖ Dual-fuel, true convection, expandable oven racks, and stainless finish aren't standard and will beef up the price.



Warming drawer is handy for entertaining.

Want in a Range

BY AMY ALBERT

Speed cooking & new technology

GE Profile electric range with Trivection

Model: JS998

Price: about \$2,800

GE's Trivection technology combines radiant, microwave, and convection heat all in one oven, making for faster cooking. (For example, a lasagna baked in

15 minutes, as opposed to an hour.) The range has a complete complement of conventional modes, too.

What's to love:

- ❖ Speedy Trivection cooking is convenient when you're hungry and want dinner fast.
- ❖ There's a programming option that's helpful for getting used to Trivection. It's easy to use, even for a computer klutz (the menu reads like an ATM screen). Food didn't taste microwaved.

❖ Despite the microwave component, there's no need to use special pans.

Shortcomings:

- ❖ Computerized features could feel superfluous if you like using your instincts and would rather test for doneness yourself.
- ❖ This range with a Trivection oven is available only with an electric cooktop.



Computerized control panel is easy to use. (Panel shown is from a GE Profile wall oven with Trivection.)

How we tested

After looking at dozens of ranges at trade shows, showrooms, and appliance stores, we narrowed our list of favorites. We then visited locations that had the models hooked up and ready for cooking and performed several cooking tasks when possible. We put lots of different pans on the stovetop to check out the working space. We boiled water, simmered tomato sauce, pan-seared a chicken breast on one

side and then broiled it on the other.

There are hundreds of ranges on the market, so we decided to focus on 30-inch ranges, because it's a standard size if you're replacing an old range. Plus, it's a good reference and jumping-off point when you start shopping. Most of the models featured on these pages come in bigger sizes; for more information, see p. 73 for a list of manufacturers' Web sites.



"Gas under glass" infrared broiler is great for even browning.

Smart features, great value

DCS 5-burner gas range

Model: RGSC-305

Burners: low simmer to 17,500 Btu

Price range: \$3,500 to \$4,300

This is one of the few 30-inch models we saw that has five burners—most offer only four. DCS also offers a self-cleaning gas oven, a feature that's more common than it used to be, but still not standard.

What's to love:

- ❖ Smart cooktop design: hot-test burner in center, nearest to where you'd position overhead ventilation.
- ❖ Oven shelves on rollers pull out especially smoothly.

- ❖ "Gas under glass" infrared broiler browns efficiently and evenly.
- ❖ Deep area to capture cooktop spills is made of a type of stainless that doesn't show scratches from scrubbing.

Shortcomings:

- ❖ Squared sides and corners of cooktop's capture area offer places for goop to collect.
- ❖ Continuous cast-iron grates are good and sturdy, but will be heavy when it's time to clean.

Terms to know when shopping

Btu, or British thermal units, indicate the amount of heat the burner can throw. You'll hear numbers ranging from 375 to 15,000 and higher. Look for burners with a flame powerful enough to boil a stock-pot full of water quickly (15,000 is plenty) and low enough to simmer a braise gently (at most 1,100). Manufacturers like DCS and Dacor refer to the low end of intensity as a simmer temperature (rather than as Btu) that will hold food at about 150°F. This is fine; the point is that the burners are built so they're capable of functioning safely and efficiently at a very low intensity. When you turn on a burner, you should see a smooth, even gradation in the flame as you go from low to high settings. Make sure the flame distributes itself evenly at the bottom of a pan, especially when the heat is cranked up high.

Convection means the oven has a fan that circulates hot air through the oven for quicker, more even cooking. Gas ovens with convection usually feature a simple fan ("convection") while the convection fan in a better model of electric oven will have its own heating unit ("true" or "European" convection).

Dual-fuel refers to a range with a combination of gas cooktop and electric oven. If you're wed to an electric oven, you might want the combination of gas cooktop and electric oven.

Infrared broiler, available in both electric and gas configurations, is a cut above a traditional broiler. This type of broiler offers an entire sheet of heat that's great for tasks like melting cheese, broiling salmon, and browning crème brûlée.

An oven that does it all

Dacor Epicure dual-fuel range

Model: ERD30SO6

Burners: low simmer to 15,000 Btu

Price: about \$4,100

With the Epicure series, Dacor not only offers a gas cooktop with an electric oven, it goes a step further: The oven cavity contains a gas broiler as well as the standard electric bottom heating element.

What's to love

- ❖ Excellent heat distribution on all cooktop burner settings, from high flame to gentle simmer. Especially good on the low end.

- ❖ Infrared gas broiler offers a continuous sheet of flame; great for even browning.
- ❖ Burners come apart for easy cleaning.

Shortcomings:

- ❖ Notched burner rings may trap food residue; removing stubborn goo could require work with a toothpick.



Infrared gas broiler throws an even sheet of flame.



Control buttons and panel readout are easy to read.

Top performance & homey-retro style

Heartland Legacy dual-fuel range

Model: 3530

Burners: 450 to 15,500 Btu

Price: about \$4,155

Heartland offers several lines, including the Legacy series, whose homespun looks are a boon for design mavens who love to cook: Legacy ranges boast professional-strength performance without the industrial-strength looks.

What's to love

- ❖ Homey looks belie top performance—a change of pace from all the gleaming metal out there (stainless also available).
- ❖ Dual-fuel with true convection is standard in all models.

- ❖ Sturdy build and feel.
- ❖ Cooktop has a generous spill-over area and upswept, seamless corners that don't trap food residue.
- ❖ Simple, easy-to-read control buttons and panel readout.
- ❖ Infrared broiler offers an even sheet of heat.

Shortcomings:

- ❖ Legacy models lack an oven window (other Heartland models have one).

Note: If color and design are a priority, also check out Aga, La Cornue, Diva, Lacanche, Molteni, Morice, and Viking.

Hefty looks & performance to match

Thermador Professional Series dual-fuel or all-gas range

Model: PDR304ZS or PGR304ZS

Burners: 375 to 15,000 Btu

Price: about \$4,300

If you're after commanding, professional-style looks, feel, and performance, Thermador's Professional could be for you. Solidly built and impressive looking, this range would be the centerpiece of any kitchen.

What's to love:

- ❖ Star-shaped sealed burners distribute heat well and boil pasta water quickly; burners disassemble especially easily for cleaning.

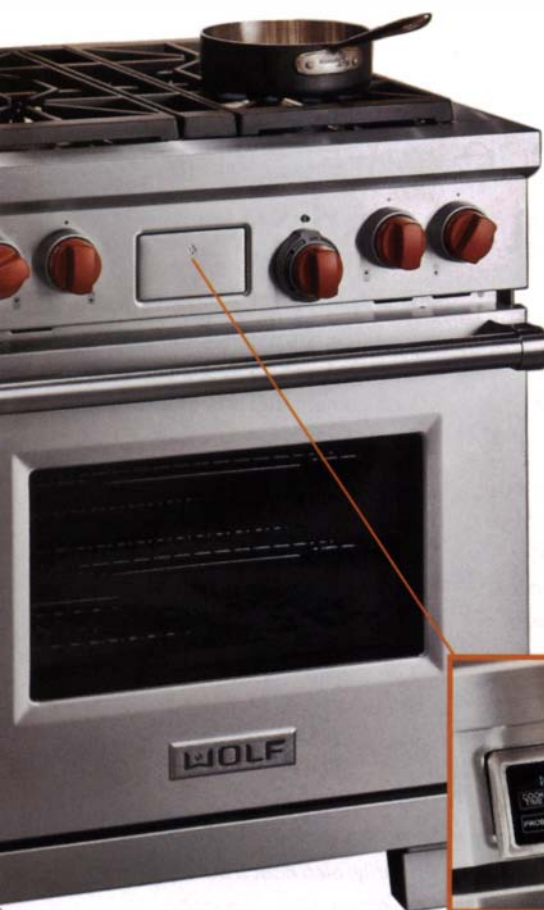
- ❖ Large dial thermometer positioned front and center; makes oven temperature easy to read.

Shortcomings:

- ❖ Broiler on all-gas model didn't do quite as even a job on browning as others we tested.



Star-shaped sealed burners distribute heat well.



Professional feel with home cooking in mind

Wolf dual-fuel range

Model: DF304

Burners: 500 to 15,000 Btu

Price: about \$4,800

Wolf's dual-fuel model is a relatively new offering from a company long known for its professional gas ranges. This model has an electric oven and gas cooktop and boasts several nifty features.

What's to love

- ❖ Simple control-panel design; oven temperature readout on knob makes for easy reading. Hidden control panel makes cleaning easy and provides a streamlined look.
- ❖ Bottom rack slides right onto oven door to balance heavy roasts.
- ❖ Electric oven is true convection with two fans.
- ❖ Hydraulic door lowers by itself with just a tug.

Shortcomings:

- ❖ Sturdy, continuous cast-iron grates are easy to slide pans around on, but are also large and heavy; possibly cumbersome.



Hidden control panel; oven temperature readout on knob.

A guide to shopping for a range

Before you shop

Here are points you'll need to consider ahead of time:

Burners. Gas or electric? Most of the ranges discussed here are gas cooktops, because most cooks prefer the control and responsiveness of gas burners.

Dual-fuel. Combining a gas cooktop and an electric oven is a great option, especially if you're used to an electric oven. In many cases, however, you'll pay more for it. Some bakers prefer the precision of an electric oven and "true convection" (see Terms

to Know when Shopping, p. 70).

Self-cleaning. Many salespeople say that although a self-cleaning feature sounds attractive, most people use it far less than they thought they would.

Ventilation. With the powerful burners on the models discussed here, you'll need efficient ventilation, so don't forget to think about a range hood.

Make a date; take a test drive

Appliance stores carry many models, but they're not usually hooked up for cooking. For hands-on shopping, where you can get a demonstration if not cook on the range yourself, make an appointment at a showroom equipped with ranges hooked up for cooking (known in the trade as "live"). Several are listed below, and you'll find more at the individual Web sites for each brand (below left). When you call for an appointment, be sure the brands you're interested in are "live."

WHEN YOU GO, ask to perform some basic cooking tasks. Boil a pot of water to see how long it takes and how the burner distributes the flame when juiced up to high. Broil an open-faced grilled cheese sandwich to check out how efficiently the broiler browns. Simmer some tomato

sauce in a shallow pan to determine how the burners distribute heat at all levels, from fast boil to lazy simmer and in between.

IF YOU CAN'T FIND A "LIVE" RANGE, bring your favorite pots and pans to an appliance store and pantomime using them on the stove. Do you like the burner setup, or does it feel cramped? Lift the grates and the burner caps to see how they come apart: Will the stovetop be easy to clean and maintain? Open and shut the oven door: Does it feel hefty or flimsy? Move the oven racks back and forth: Is it easy to ferry them around the oven cavity?

ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS. Good showrooms are staffed with people who love to cook and who enjoy discussing the very minutiae you're mulling over as you decide on the range you want.

Major manufacturers

Although we focused on 30-inch ranges for this story, nearly all the companies listed below make models in bigger sizes, too.

Aga
www.aga-ranges.com

Amana
amana.com

Bosch
boschappliances.com

La Cornue
www.la-cornue.com

Dacor
dacor.com

DCS
dcsappliances.com

Diva
divade Provence.com

Five Star
fivestarrange.com

Frigidaire
www.frigidaire.com

GE
geappliances.com

Heart and
www.heartlandapp.com

Jade and Dynasty
jadeappliances.com

Jenn-Air
jennair.com

Kenmore
kenmore.com

KitchenAid
kitchenaid.com

Kuppersbusch
kuppersbuschusa.com

Lacanche
frenchranges.com

Maytag
maytag.com

Molteni
www.molteni.com

Morice
www.morice-usa.com

Thermador
thermador.com

Viking
vikingrange.com

Whirlpool
whirlpool.com

Wolf
wolfappliance.com

Showrooms with "live" ranges

East

Albano Appliance
Pound Ridge, New York
914-764-4051

BSH (Bosch, Thermador)
Brooklyn, New York
718-625-2425

Clarke Distribution (Wolf)
Norwalk, Connecticut
203-838-9385

HADCO
Dulles, Virginia
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Suwanee, Georgia
800-241-9152

Yale Electrical Supply
Dorchester, Massachusetts
617-825-9253

Central/Midwest

Oakton Distributors, Inc.
Des Plaines, Illinois
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Cincinnati, Ohio
800-510-6392
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
800-437-6281

Roth Concept Center
Aurora, Colorado
303-373-9090 and other locations

The Westye Group (Wolf)
Glendale Heights, Illinois
630-872-5100

West Coast

Bradlee Distributors (Wolf)
Seattle, Washington
206-284-8400

McPhails Appliance
San Rafael, California
415-453-6070

Purcell-Murray
Brisbane, California
800-892-4040

Huntington Beach, California
800-294-0644
San Jose, California
408-907-3800

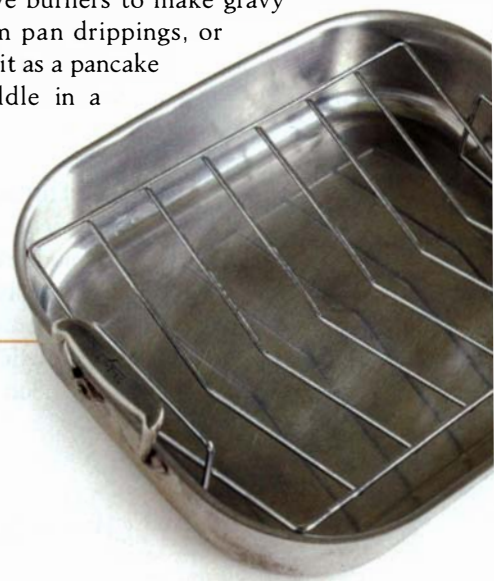
Amy Albert is Fine Cooking's senior editor. ♦

BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT

Turkey can be tricky to cook just right—by the time the legs are done, the breast can get overcooked. There are plenty of strategies to offset this problem, like roasting the bird upside down or basting vigilantly, and while they certainly don't hurt, the best results I've ever tasted come from brining. I've experimented with brining turkeys for several years, and over the next few pages, I'll share my methods for preparing the Thanksgiving bird—and for making delicious gravy. In this installment of From Our Test Kitchen, you'll also learn the best way to roast red peppers, discover which apples are best for baking, and learn how to make apple butter. Plus, we'll reveal the surprising results of our beef broth tasting.

What we mean by “heavy-duty roasting pan”

Even if you only use it once a year for the Thanksgiving turkey, a heavy-duty flame-proof roasting pan is worth having. It's made of thick metal (sometimes more than one layer) with a flat bottom, so it won't warp in the oven, and you can put it right over your stove burners to make gravy from pan drippings, or use it as a pancake griddle in a



For juicier and tastier meat, try brining

To brine means to soak something in a salt solution, and it works because of a principle you learned in high school chemistry: osmosis, or the tendency of fluids to diffuse through cells in order to equalize ion concentrations. Techspeak aside, it means that when you soak a turkey (or other meat) in brine for long enough, it absorbs some of the moisture—6% to 8% of its original weight, in fact—so when you cook the turkey, you start off and end up with a moister bird.

Now for the bonus part: Some of the salt and any other flavors you add to the brine also migrate into the bird, so your turkey becomes more flavorful. Not only that, but the salt causes a change in the turkey's protein structure that allows it to better hold on to its moisture. What could be better?

Brining tips

BRINING ISN'T JUST FOR TURKEY. Any lean meat—like pork, chicken, or shrimp—is ideal for brining. The smaller the item, the less time it needs in the brine.

DON'T OVERCOOK. Brining doesn't completely protect meat against dryness, but it will give you more leeway.

JAZZ UP YOUR BRINE WITH OTHER FLAVORS. Add herbs and spices, a little of a flavorful sweetener (like honey or maple syrup), or replace some of the water with another liquid like apple cider or coffee. Just remember that when you add sugar, foods tend to brown faster.

KEEP IT COLD AND RINSE IT WELL. Raw meat is still raw meat, whether it's in brine or not. Always keep foods below 40°F while brining, and then rinse them well to remove excess salt from the surface before cooking.

BE CAREFUL WHEN ADDING MORE SALT. The brine provides just about all the seasoning you need, so be judicious about adding more just before cooking. Always taste first when making sauces with pan drippings, which tend to be quite salty already.

pinch. It also has sturdy handles and sides that are about 3 inches high, so taking the pan out of the oven is not a perilous act involving visions of your beautiful golden turkey rolling across the floor.

I don't like roasting pans with nonstick interiors. Sure, nonstick makes cleanup a little easier, but it also means you have to be careful about how you treat the pan in order to protect the nonstick surface. A roasting pan should be a workhorse, not something that needs a lot of coddling.

In the test kitchen, our favorite roaster is the All-Clad 16x13-inch stainless-steel roasting pan. At about \$200, it's pricey, but so durable that your great-grandchildren will probably inherit it. But if an All-Clad isn't in your budget, Calphalon and Cuisinart both make good roasters for about half that price. For mail-order sources, See p. 90.



How to brine a turkey

there's not much to it

MAKE A BASIC BRINE: In a pot that holds at least 6 quarts, combine 1 cup kosher salt, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar, and 2 quarts cool water. Put the pot over high heat and stir occasionally until the salt and sugar dissolve. Remove from the heat and let cool. Stir in another 2 quarts water and chill in the refrigerator.

SOAK THE TURKEY IN THE BRINE: Remove the neck, giblets, and tail (if present) from the turkey; reserve them for making turkey broth (see p. 76). Discard the liver. Rinse the turkey well. Double up two turkey-size oven bags and then

roll down the edges of the bags a bit to help them stay open. Put the bags in a heavy-duty roasting pan and put the turkey, breast side down, in the inner bag. Pour the brine over the turkey (have someone hold the bags open for you, if possible). Gather the inner bag tightly around the turkey so the brine is forced to cover most of the turkey and secure the bag with a twist tie. Secure the outer bag with a twist tie. Refrigerate the turkey (in the roasting pan, to catch any leaks) for 12 to 18 hours.

NOTE: If your turkey is kosher, don't brine it, as it has already been treated with salt.

Brined Roast Turkey with Sage Butter Rub

Serves twelve to fourteen.

14-pound fresh, natural turkey with giblets (removed and reserved), brined as described at left

Sage Butter (see the recipe on p. 76)

Olive oil as needed
Kosher salt

Heat the oven to 350°F and position a rack in the lower third of the oven. Remove the turkey from the brine, rinse it very well, and pat it dry with paper towels. Discard the brine and oven bags. With your hands, gently loosen the skin from the turkey breast and legs, being careful not to tear the skin. Use one hand to distribute the sage butter under the skin and use your other hand outside the skin to massage and smooth the butter as evenly as possible over the turkey breast and as much of the legs as you can get to. Tuck the wings behind the turkey to secure the neck skin and loosely tie the legs together.

Rub the turkey all over with a light coating of olive oil, and sprinkle lightly with salt (to help crisp the skin). Put the turkey, breast side up, on a roasting rack in a heavy-duty flameproof roasting pan. Put the pan in the oven, with the legs pointing to the back of the oven, if possible.

After the turkey has been roasting for 1 hour, begin rotating the roasting pan (for even browning) and basting the turkey with pan drippings every 30 minutes or so. If there aren't enough drippings to baste with at first, use a little olive oil until there are drippings. The turkey is done when an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the thigh registers 170°F and the juices run clear when you remove the thermometer. Check the temperature in both thighs; sometimes one thigh will be done before the other. The total roasting time will be about 3 to 3½ hours. Transfer the turkey to a carving board, tent it with foil, and let it rest while you make the gravy (see p. 76).



You can't go wrong pairing sage with turkey. Make this butter up to two days ahead.

Sage Butter

Yields about 1/2 cup.

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage**
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- 1/4 teaspoon Bell's poultry seasoning (optional)**

In a medium bowl, stir all the ingredients until well combined. Refrigerate if making ahead.

BASICS RECIPE

Turkey Broth

Yields about 3 1/2 cups.

You can make this broth up to three days ahead.

- Turkey neck, tail, gizzard, and heart**
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- 1 large onion, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces**
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1 small carrot, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces**
- 1 rib celery, cut into 2-inch pieces**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 2 large sprigs each fresh thyme and parsley**
- 10 black peppercorns**

Chop the neck into three or four pieces with a cleaver; chop the gizzard in half. Heat the oil in a large (at least 3-quart) saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the neck, tail, gizzard, heart, onion, and salt. Stir to coat with oil, cover, and cook gently for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally; the meat will release lots of juices. Add 4 cups cold water, the carrot, celery, herbs, and peppercorns. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, cover, and simmer gently until the broth is flavorful, about 45 minutes. Strain the broth, cool, and, if using right away, remove and discard the fat (for a tool to help you do this, see above right). If making ahead, refrigerate the broth and discard the solidified fat before using.

Mushroom Gravy

The woodsy flavor of porcini makes this gravy something special. Start soaking the mushrooms at least 15 minutes before the turkey is done.

Yields about 1 quart.

- 1/2 ounce (1/2 cup) dried porcini mushrooms**
- 1 recipe turkey broth (left)**
- 1/4 cup turkey fat (see below) or vegetable oil**
- 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- 2 to 3 sprigs fresh thyme**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice; more to taste**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

Soak the porcini in 1 cup very hot water until soft, 10 to 15 minutes. Fish out the porcini and slowly pour the soaking liquid into the turkey broth, leaving any sediment from the mushrooms behind; you should have about 4 cups combined liquid. Chop the porcini finely.

After transferring the turkey to a cutting board, pour the drippings from the roasting pan into a heat-proof measuring cup. Let the fat rise to the top and then spoon 1/4 cup of the fat

back into the roasting pan. Set the roasting pan over two burners on medium heat. Sprinkle the flour into the pan and use a flat whisk or wooden spoon to combine it with the fat. Cook for about 2 minutes.

Slowly pour 1/2 cup of the broth into the pan while whisking vigorously to disperse the flour. The liquid should thicken quickly and become gluey. As soon as it thickens, whisk in another 1/2 cup broth. Repeat until the gravy starts to look more like a smooth sauce; then whisk in the remaining broth and bring to a simmer. Add the thyme and simmer for 5 minutes. Strain the gravy through a medium sieve and stir in the chopped porcini and lemon juice. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and more lemon juice.

cool tool



A better tool for defatting broth

The fat separator—a cup with a spout at the bottom that lets you pour off fat-free liquid once the fat has risen to the top—is a pretty good idea, except for one drawback: Some fat always gets in the spout, too. Oxo has come up with a neat little solution to that problem: A rubber stopper in the spout that keeps the fat in the cup and out of the spout. The fat separator holds 4 cups of liquid and has a handy built-in strainer, too. It isn't perfect, however. In order for the stopper to do its job, you have to have enough liquid to come above the top of the spout opening (about 1 1/4 cups). Otherwise, you end up actually sucking more fat into the spout when you remove the stopper. For those times when you don't have enough liquid, this cup isn't the best choice—a smaller version would be ideal.

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Not every apple belongs in a pie

It's hard to think of another fruit that's available in more varieties than apples. With all those choices, picking one for a pie or other apple dessert (like the ones on pp. 64-67) can be tricky because each variety behaves a little differently when cooked. To cut down on the guesswork, contributing editor Pam Anderson has classified

some of the most common varieties into these three helpful categories. For pies, Pam recommends mainly using apples that hold their shape, along with a few apples that soften to tie everything together. If you're considering a variety that isn't listed, test its flavor and texture yourself by sautéing a few slices in butter.



Apples that hold their shape

Rome

Softens but holds its shape nicely. Quite juicy, with a complex sweet-tart flavor.

Golden Delicious
Holds its shape fairly well but gets a bit mushy. Very juicy but flavor lacks complexity.

Granny Smith
Holds its shape fairly well. Flavor is not as apple as others, but is fine when teamed with a softer, perfumy apple.

Braeburn

Great texture—soft but still holds its shape. Flavor is on the sweet side.

Apples that soften

Empire

Fairly juicy, tart, and perfumy.

Cortland

Good complex flavor with well-rounded sweetness.

McIntosh

Practically purées itself when cooked. Sweet with a pretty pink hue. Great in applesauce and preserves.

Macoun

Not very juicy. Nice pink color and great flavor.

Apples to avoid in cooking

Red Delicious

Flavorless when cooked. Save this one for the lunchbox.

Fuji

When cooked, flavor is flat and texture is like reconstituted dried apple.

Honey-Spice Apple Butter

Yields about 1½ cups.

2 pounds Macintosh apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 1-inch chunks
2 cups apple cider
¼ cup dark brown sugar
¼ cup honey
⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon
Pinch ground allspice
Pinch kosher salt

Combine the apples and cider in a heavy-based 3-quart saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and then reduce the heat to a maintain a simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the apples have mostly broken down, about 30 minutes. Use a rubber spatula to force the mixture through a medium sieve into a bowl. Rinse out the saucepan and return the mixture to the pan. Whisk in the brown sugar, honey, cinnamon, allspice, and salt. Bring back to a simmer over medium heat and adjust the heat to maintain a vigorous simmer. Cook until the mixture reduces and thickens to a spreadable consistency, about 75 minutes. As the mixture cooks, stir occasionally at first and then more frequently as it thickens; keep in mind that the apple butter will thicken a little more as it cools. Scrape the apple butter into a storage container and press a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface to prevent a skin from forming as it cools. Once completely cool, you can remove the plastic, cover with a lid, and refrigerate for up to two weeks.

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Turnip Or Rutabaga?

Because they're sometimes marketed as yellow turnips or wax turnips, rutabagas are frequently confused with turnips. Both of these root vegetables are members of the *Brassica* family, which includes cabbages, but the rutabaga is probably a hybrid of a cabbage and a turnip.

Turnips are usually white-fleshed with white or white and purple skin. Rutabagas usually have yellow flesh and a purple-tinged yellow skin, and they're bigger than turnips. (There are also yellow-fleshed turnips and white-fleshed rutabagas, but you won't generally find them in supermarkets.) Both vegetables have a slightly sweet but snappy flavor reminiscent of cabbage. Rutabagas are sweeter than turnips.

When purchasing either, choose those that are firm and feel heavy for their size. Turnips tend to get woody as they grow, so look for ones that are less than 4 inches in diameter. If the greens are still attached, remove them before storing the roots in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Store the turnip greens separately if you plan to eat them.

Prep tips

Before peeling a turnip or rutabaga, trim off the top and bottom; this gives you a flat surface on which to stand the vegetable and will eliminate wobbling. Turnip skin is usually tender enough to pare with a vegetable peeler. Rutabagas are often sold coated in food-grade wax and usually require paring with a knife.

How to roast a red pepper



1 Coat each pepper in a little oil. If you have gas burners, you can roast a pepper directly on the grate over high heat, turning the pepper occasionally until it's charred all over.

To char a batch of peppers, a hot charcoal or gas grill is best, but the broiler works, too. Put the oiled peppers on a foil-lined baking sheet and broil as close to the element as possible, turning them so they char evenly.



2 Put the charred peppers in a bowl while they're still hot and cover with plastic. Let them rest until they're cool enough to handle. Pull on the stem; the seed core will pop out. Cut the pepper open, flick off any seeds, and turn skin side up.



3 Use a paring knife to scrape away the charred skin. Don't rinse the peppers with water or you'll dilute their flavor.

FOR ELECTRIC STOVES, get a stovetop pepper roaster. It turns your electric burner into a little grill, and it's also handy for heating tortillas. For sources, see p. 90.



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Canned beef broth

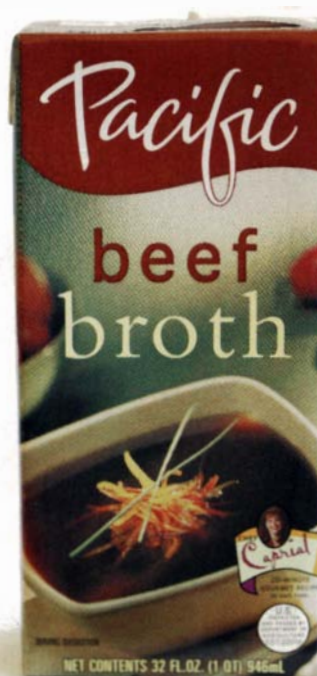
Homemade beef broth may be the secret to four-star sauces, but for most of us, the store-bought variety is infinitely more convenient. To find out which brands are good to use, eight *Fine Cooking* staffers participated in a blind tasting of six products sold at supermarkets across the country. (We chose the low-sodium version if available.) Remarkably, only one broth—our top pick—was assertively and pleasantly beefy. The rest, while not entirely unpleasant, were vaguely beefy, if that.

—Kimberly Y. Masibay, associate editor

1 Top Pick PACIFIC

\$2.99 for a
32-ounce aseptic carton

This broth's authentic beef flavor, subtle vegetal notes, and rounded consistency made it the definitive favorite. Rich and well seasoned, it was perfectly tasty sipped straight from a spoon. A solid choice for a soup base or braising liquid. Reducing would concentrate the good beef flavor as well as the salt, so be sure to taste before salting further.



The others Beef broths are numbered in order of preference; prices may vary.



2 KITCHEN BASICS

\$3.19 for a
32-ounce aseptic carton

This clear, amber-colored broth had a nice peppery note, but tasters wanted a fuller, rounder beef flavor. Inoffensive and mild, this lightly salted broth is a safe bet for braises, pan sauces, and risottos, where reduction is involved and other strong flavors dominate.



3 CAMPBELL'S

\$1.29 for a
10.5-ounce can

This concentrated broth was coffee-dark (even after being diluted with water, as instructed on the label) and looked promising. But tasters complained that it tasted like bouillon and was staggeringly salty. Marrowy undertones and notes of onion and burnt caramel.



4 SWANSON Lower Sodium

\$1.29 for a
14-ounce can

Its bland flavor—vaguely sweet, vaguely vegetal—wasn't exactly offensive, but it wasn't beefy either. "This could almost pass for chicken broth," noted one taster. Its pale brown color and thin consistency didn't help.



5 COLLEGE INN Lower Sodium

89¢ for a
14.5-ounce can

Available primarily in the Northeast, this broth had a familiar bouilloney aroma, reminiscent of a high-school cafeteria. The slightly beefy flavor was marred by a deep, lingering bitterness. The broth was the lightest colored of the bunch and slightly cloudy.



6 HEALTH VALLEY

\$1.89 for a
14.25-ounce can

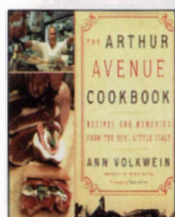
This product received low scores because it didn't taste like beef broth. The pleasant, sweet flavors of cooked carrot, celery, and onion came through loud and clear, but tasters wondered, "Where's the beef?" The broth was greenish-brown and clouded with sediment.

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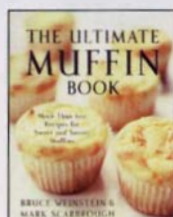
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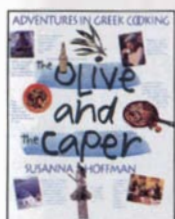
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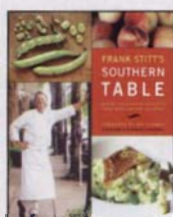
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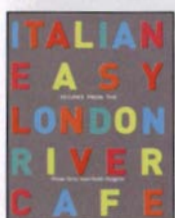
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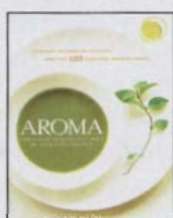
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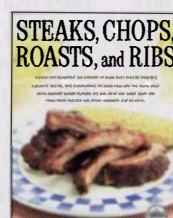
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Freezing & Thawing 101

How to get safe, delicious results

BY LINDA J. HARRIS, PH.D.



We all have a favorite kitchen appliance, one that we couldn't imagine being without. For me, it's the freezer. It holds everything I need—frozen tortillas and breads, an assortment of vegetables and meats—to make tasty meals within minutes of arriving home from work. And when time is on my side, I know I'll have chopped herbs, homemade stock, berries, pastry dough, and many other ingredients at hand to prepare more elaborate dishes.

How does the freezer make all this possible? Well, when you freeze food, a couple of important things happen. First, the pathogens that cause food-borne illness can't grow, which makes food-safety experts like me jump for joy. In fact, as long as food remains frozen, it's as safe as the day it was put in the freezer. (It's thawing that invites trouble, but we'll get to that later.) Second, freezing also preserves food's quality by slowing down the microbes and chemical reactions that degrade food. But some of these reactions do continue during frozen storage, so eventually, the flavor, color, and texture deteriorate to the point that the food just isn't ap-

pealing, even if it's still technically safe to eat.

Not all freezing is created equal

It might seem like the only role you play in freezing is finding space in the freezer, but actually there's a lot you can do to streamline the freezing process and to keep your food in optimum condition.

Faster is better. The packaged frozen foods you see at the supermarket were most likely "flash frozen" in a super-cold industrial freezer. The faster food freezes, the better—because freezing is a bit injurious to food. As the water in food freezes, ice crystals form and rupture cell walls. Rapid freezing keeps the ice crystals tiny and reduces the time for cells to leak fluids, which is good for the food's quality. Large ice crystals can damage meat or produce, leading to texture and moisture loss when the food is thawed.

Your home freezer can't mimic the efficacy of an industrial freezer that freezes food in minutes and stores it well below 0°F. But you can still get decent results at home by using the tactics in the box at right.

Freezing isn't forever. Commercially frozen foods often have a "best if used by" date, which makes inventory-control easy. But what about all the food you've frozen yourself: Can you eat that chili from 1999?

I don't think there's a simple answer. Storage guidelines, like those on p. 86, give wide estimates because they depend on

many variables: How fresh was the food when it was frozen? How quickly did it freeze? What was the storage temperature, and was it consistent? How will the food ultimately be used? And, perhaps most important, how discriminating is your palate? For the sake of flavor, I'd probably make a new batch of

(Continued on p. 86)

Help your freezer do its job

- ◆ Set the freezer to 0°F or lower and monitor the temperature with a freezer thermometer (available at supermarkets and hardware stores).
- ◆ Store food in containers that provide a barrier to air and moisture. Well-sealed plastic freezer containers work, as do heavy-duty plastic freezer bags or wrap, freezer paper, or heavy-duty foil. (Many foods expand upon freezing, so don't overfill, but at the same time don't leave too much air space.)
- ◆ Small items freeze faster, so freeze food portions you normally use in recipes: one or two cups of stock, a cup of sliced bananas, a tablespoon of tomato paste.
- ◆ Arrange unfrozen packages in a single layer, slightly separated from one another, so they freeze faster.
- ◆ Try to place foods on the freezer's floor or near the walls.
- ◆ Don't overload the freezer with too much unfrozen food at once. And once food is frozen, keep the items stacked closely together. Freezers are most energy efficient when full. If your freezer is running low, consider freezing jugs or containers of water.

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chili before consuming vintage 1999, but some people wouldn't give it a second thought.

Use the kitchen freezer for fast turnover. The refrigerator's freezer is best for short-term storage, one or two months. The temperature inside a kitchen freezer fluctuates over a broad range because it's opened often, and also because the self-defrost feature includes programmed heating and cooling to melt frost before it builds up.

Those temperature fluctuations cause microscopic melting and refreezing in foods, which encourages ice-crystal growth. Over time, this harms the food's texture. And as water moves from one area in the food to another, the surface of the food dries out—a condition known as freezer burn. Water migration can also create visible ice crystals. If you've kept ice cream for longer than a couple of weeks, you know what I mean.

So for long-term frozen storage—up to 12 months—stash food in a stand-alone freezer that won't be opened often and doesn't have a defrost feature.

Thawing foods safely

There's one thing I don't like about frozen food: thawing it. From a food-safety perspective, that's when you court trouble. As food thaws, the outer surface warms up first. Cells that were damaged during freezing release nutrients and moisture. And in some foods, this can create ideal conditions for pathogens to grow and multiply.

Thaw food at the temperature you plan to store it. Baked goods—breads, cakes, cookies—can be safely thawed and stored at room temperature. But meat, prepared entrées, fruits and vegetables, and raw dough should be thawed and stored in the refrigerator to minimize pathogen activity. Just like slow freezing, slow thawing can lead to moisture loss, but food safety always trumps quality.

Admittedly, doing things the right way can try one's patience: It can take more than two days to defrost a 12-pound frozen turkey in the fridge. To safely hasten thawing, seal the frozen item in a leakproof container or plastic bag and immerse it in cold tap water. (Check the water every half an hour to be sure it remains cold.) Once thawed,

Q: Is it OK to refreeze food that's been thawed?

A: Food can be safely refrozen within 48 hours of thawing if the thawing took place in the refrigerator or in cold water and the temperature of the thawed food has remained below 40°F. But the food's quality might suffer because fluids that seep from cells during refreezing and subsequent thawing can adversely affect texture and flavor.

refrigerate the food until you're ready to use it—which, ideally, should happen quickly. Thawed frozen food spoils as fast as, or faster than, its never-frozen counterpart because cells ruptured during freezing and thawing release nutrients for microbes to consume.

If you're in a real hurry to put something on the table, you can use your microwave's defrost feature to thaw food you plan to prepare and eat right away.

Or, better yet, skip thawing entirely. My favorite frozen foods are those that can go straight from the freezer to the oven or microwave for reheating: Frozen vegetables can go right from the freezer into a steamer or pot of boiling water. And, of course, frozen fruit can go right into the blender for a quick, satisfying smoothie.

Linda J. Harris, Ph.D., has a doctorate in microbiology and is a cooperative extension specialist in the Department of Food Science & Technology at the University of California, Davis. ♦

To freeze—or not to freeze?

The table below lists foods that freeze well and those that don't. Before you put an item in the freezer, stick a label on it. Write the item's name and the date it was prepared. The guidelines below will help you calculate a "use-by" date.

Foods that freeze well

- Red meat: 4 to 12 months
- Poultry: 9 to 12 months
- Seafood: 3 to 6 months
- Raw bacon: 1 to 2 months
- Some casseroles: 1 to 4 months
- Soup, stew, and stock: 2 to 4 months
- Cooked legumes: 4 to 6 months
- Whole berries: 8 to 12 months
- Peeled ripe bananas: 2 to 4 weeks
- Blanched vegetables: 2 to 12 months, depending on the vegetable
- Bread: 6 to 8 months
- Pie dough: 6 to 8 weeks
- Nuts: 6 to 12 months
- Butter: 6 to 9 months
- Egg whites: 12 months
- Flour: 6 to 12 months

Foods that don't freeze well

- High-moisture vegetables like lettuce, celery, and cabbage become watery.
- Cream and custard fillings separate.
- Meringue toughens.
- Milk undergoes flavor changes.
- Sour cream and yogurt separate.
- Heavy cream won't whip after being frozen.

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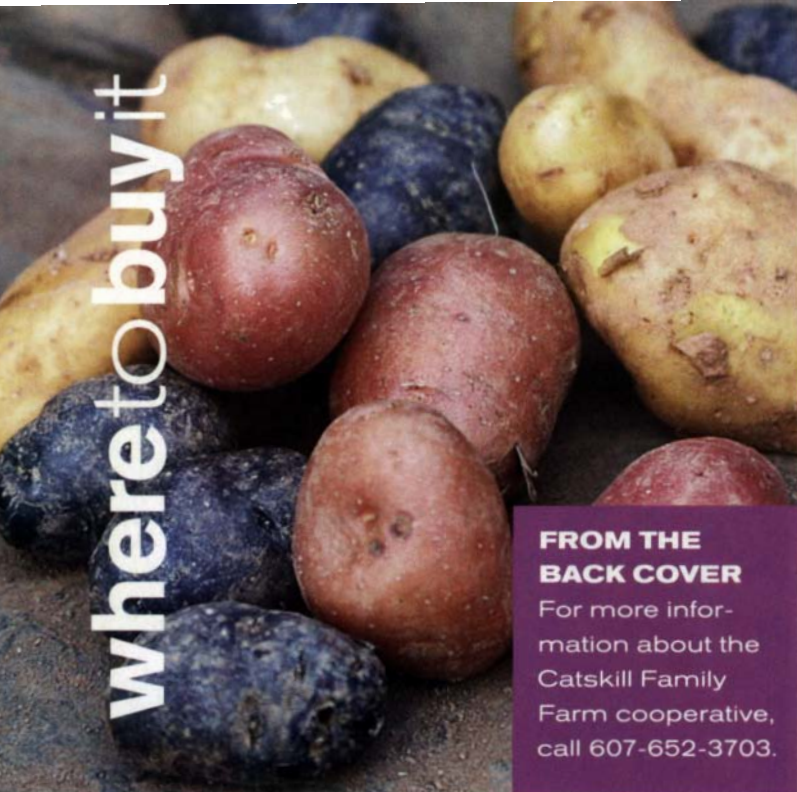


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FROM THE BACK COVER
For more information about the Catskill Family Farm cooperative, call 607-652-3703.

A Seattle Chef's Relaxed Menu, p. 38

For the cornmeal rosemary cake, order corrugated cake rounds from Schroeder's Bakeries (schroedersbakery.com; 800-850-7763).

Fall Vegetables, p. 45

Chipotle chiles in adobo (used in the twice-baked sweet potatoes) are available in ethnic food sections of well-stocked supermarkets, but you can also buy a number of brands online from Mexgrocer.com (877-463-9476), where prices start at \$2.10.

Crustless Quiche, p. 50

For the appetizer-size version of Randall Price's clafoutis, you'll need mini muffin pans. They're available in most kitchenware stores, or try A Cook's Wares (cookswares.com; 800-915-9788), where 24-cup nonstick pans start at \$20.

America's Best Home Cook Winning Recipes, p. 54

Nancy Wiese's goat cheese soufflé recipe calls for 9- to 10-ounce individual soufflé dishes. Visit Cooking.com (800-663-8810), which carries a set of four 10-ounce soufflé dishes for \$13.95, as well as individual Apilco extra-high 9-ounce dishes for \$13.50 each.

Thai Chicken Soup, p. 60

Stock up on ingredients for Thai chicken soup at Temple of Thai (templeofthai.com), where you'll find fresh galangal (\$3.89 for 3.5 ounces), lemongrass (\$2.99 for 8 ounces), and wild (kaffir) lime leaves (\$3.79 for about 20).



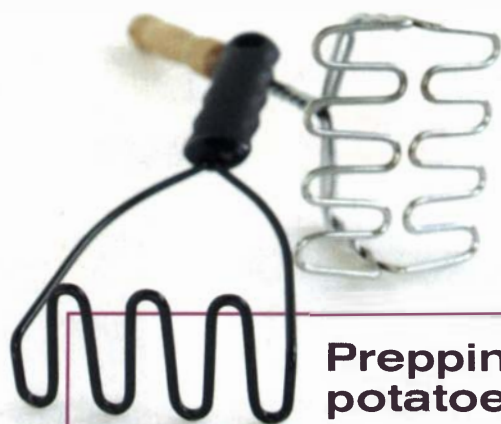
Food Science, p. 84
Labeling containers and bags can make it easier to keep track of exactly what food is in your freezer—and how long it's been there. To buy freezer labels online, look to The Home Marketplace (thehome.marketplace.com; 800-356-3876), which carries sets of 100 in handy dispensers for \$4.95 apiece.

In Season, p. 20

You can find seeds for Florence (bulb) fennel in seed catalogs and in many garden centers as well. Good mail-order seed sources include The Cook's Garden (800-457-9703; cooksgarden.com), John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds (860-567-6086; kitchengardenseeds.com), and Stokes Seeds (800-396-9238; stokeseeds.com).

From Our Test Kitchen, p. 74

For large, heavy-duty roasting pans, visit Cooking.com (800-663-8810), or Sur La Table (800-243-0852; surlatable.com), both of which carry a range of brands. Sur La Table also sells a stovetop pepper roaster for \$14.99.



Prepping potatoes

Potatoes are such a versatile vegetable for Thanksgiving that you're likely to find them on most holiday tables, and several tools can make preparing your potato side dishes easier.

A range of potato mashers in various shapes and sizes is available at Amazon.com (from \$2.99).

We're especially fond of traditional wire mashers like the ones above. All-Clad's food mill (left) is very sturdy, comes apart easily, and purées thoroughly and efficiently. It sells for \$99.99 at Chef's Catalog (800-884-2433; chefscatalog.com).



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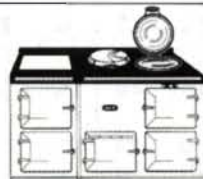
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nutritioninformation

Recipe	Page	Calories		Protein	Carb	Fats (g)				Chol.	Sodium	Fiber	Notes
(analysis per serving)		total	from fat	(g)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	(mg)	(mg)	(g)	
Letters	14												
Goat Cheese Marinated with Lemon & Herbs		160	140	4	1	15	5	9	1	15	400	0	based on 6 servings, w/o crostini
In Season	20												
Braised Fennel with Pastis		140	70	3	15	8	1	5	2	0	400	6	based on 4 servings
Thanksgiving on the Side	10E												
Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes with Horseradish		280	150	4	29	16	10	5	1	50	1210	2	based on 12 servings
Mashed Potatoes with Olive Oil & Parsley		440	250	5	40	28	4	21	3	0	310	3	based on 8 servings
Molasses Mashed Sweet Potatoes		250	80	3	42	9	6	2	0	25	190	6	based on 8 servings
Green Beans with Toasted Slivered Almonds		150	120	3	7	13	6	5	2	25	290	3	based on 8 servings
Long-Cooked Green Beans with Oregano		100	70	2	9	7	1	5	1	0	580	3	based on 8 servings
Orange-Dijon Green Beans		90	50	1	8	6	4	2	0	15	350	3	based on 8 servings
Butternut Squash Gratin with Onion & Sage		290	150	4	34	17	9	6	1	45	640	8	based on 6 servings
Pearl Onion Gratin with Parmesan, Savory & Thyme		240	150	5	19	17	10	5	1	55	380	2	based on 8 servings
Sweet Potato & Leek Gratin		560	380	8	38	43	24	15	3	125	730	4	based on 6 servings
Cranberry-Pear Salsa		90	10	0	21	1.5	0	1	0.5	0	25	2	per ¼ cup
Cranberry-Orange Relish with Ginger		25	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	50	1	per ¼ cup
Cranberry Citrus Compote		200	0	0	51	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	per ½ cup
Classic Bread Dressing		180	80	5	24	9	5	3	1	20	410	3	based on 12 servings
Cornbread Pecan Dressing		450	310	12	29	35	8	17	8	130	690	6	based on 12 servings
Italian Bread & Sausage Dressing		280	100	11	30	11	3	7	1	10	700	2	based on 12 servings
Seattle Chef's Relaxed Menu	38												
Homemade Bianco with Icy Grapes		170	0	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	10	1	based on 8 servings
"Last of the Yakima Peppers" Peperonata		270	230	3	10	25	3	18	3	0	670	5	based on 8 servings, w/o crackers
Mustard-Crusted Roast Chickens		560	320	52	4	35	9	17	7	165	1710	0	based on 8 servings
Warm Green Bean, Pancetta & Tomato Salad with Parmesan		350	260	9	14	29	12	14	3	30	750	4	based on 8 servings
Cornmeal Rosemary Cake with Pine Nuts & Orange Glaze		530	210	7	74	24	15	6	3	140	140	2	based on 10 servings
Fall Vegetables	45												
Cider-Glazed Turnips & Apples with Sage & Bacon		190	110	2	18	13	6	5	1	20	760	3	based on 6 servings
Parsnip Pancakes with Sour Cream & Caramelized Onions		320	170	5	34	19	6	11	1	70	620	6	based on 4 servings
Creamy Brussels Sprout Gratin		380	240	9	28	27	17	8	1	90	550	5	based on 6 servings
Twice-Baked Sweet Potatoes with Chipotle Chile		310	90	4	53	10	6	3	0	25	660	7	based on 4 servings
Crustless Quiche	50												
Shallot, Bacon & Sun-Dried Tomato Clafoutis		590	470	17	15	52	28	18	5	270	1020	0	based on 6 servings
Red Bell Pepper, Thyme & Goat Cheese Clafoutis		330	250	10	11	28	16	9	2	220	650	1	based on 6 servings
Ham, Mushroom & Chive Clafoutis		350	250	14	11	28	14	9	3	235	910	0	based on 6 servings
Winning Recipes	54												
Rib-Eye Steak Sandwiches		710	400	50	23	45	21	20	4	220	1150	2	based on 4 servings, 5-oz. steaks
Goat Cheese Soufflé with Red Peppers & Chanterelles		420	340	12	9	38	21	15	2	240	760	1	based on 6 servings
Mediterranean Beef Wraps with Roasted Red Peppers		650	320	40	41	35	9	22	4	55	1200	3	based on 8 servings
Stuffed Filet Mignon with Mushroom-Gorgonzola Grits		960	510	67	47	57	33	16	8	195	2380	4	based on 4 servings
Savory Mediterranean Baklava		840	540	24	52	60	35	20	4	190	1410	3	based on 8 servings
Warm Steak Salad with Rosemary Flatbread		840	330	49	75	37	16	18	3	105	2550	10	based on 6 servings
Thai Chicken Soup	60												
Chicken Coconut Soup		350	210	16	25	23	19	2	1	25	770	3	based on 4 servings
Apple Desserts	62												
Apple Cranberry Crisp		520	190	3	86	21	9	8	3	35	120	9	based on 8 servings
Ginger Apple Crumb Pie		410	140	3	67	16	9	5	1	35	80	5	based on 12 servings
Moist Apple-Walnut Cake		380	160	5	51	18	9	4	4	65	200	2	based on 16 servings
Almond Cheesecake Apple Bars		210	90	3	30	10	4	4	1	35	90	2	based on 16 servings
From Our Test Kitchen	74												
Brined Roast Turkey with Sage Butter Rub		650	340	73	0	37	13	15	9	260	360	0	based on 14 servings
Mushroom Gravy		90	50	4	4	6	1	2	3	20	90	1	per ¼ cup
Honey-Spice Apple Butter		50	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	15	1	per tablespoon
Quick & Delicious	94C												
Spiced Lamb Pitas with Fresh Mango Salsa		610	220	36	64	24	10	10	3	110	1010	5	based on 4 servings
Lemon Chicken Soup with Spinach & Dill		230	100	18	14	11	3	6	2	50	710	2	based on 6 servings
Broiled Tex-Mex Drumsticks with Avocado & Tomato Salad		380	230	30	9	25	6	15	4	95	980	5	based on 4 servings
Butternut Squash Ravioli with Rosemary Oil		300	140	7	33	15	4	9	1	20	550	2	based on 6 servings
Greek-Style Shrimp Salad		330	210	23	7	23	6	15	2	185	710	2	based on 4 servings
Sausage, Potato & Apple Sauté		420	150	23	47	17	5	10	1	35	1380	5	based on 4 servings
Pan-Fried Scallops with Malt Vinegar Dipping Sauce		210	100	18	10	11	1	5	5	65	450	0	based on 6 servings

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at The Food Consulting Company of Del Mar, California. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in the

calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the

quantity of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper per serving for entrées, and ⅛ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper per serving for side dishes.



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READER SERVICE NO. 62



"Soil nutrients, elevation...there's an intangible something that makes potatoes grown in the Catskill Mountains taste so good," say the Janiszewskis.



At harvest time, Joan and John Janiszewski enlist their kids, Neal, Anna, and Stefan, to help dig potatoes.

the best-tasting potatoes organically grown

Joan and John Janiszewski can barely keep up with the demand for the organic potatoes from their farm in upstate New York, part of Catskill Family Farms, a small grower's cooperative in New York State's Catskill Mountains.

The potatoes, sold to restaurants and at local farmers' markets and greenmarkets, are prized for their thin skin, creamy texture, and concentrated flavor. French fingerlings (the family's favorite) are good in any dish, but especially hash browns and home fries, while Austrian Crescents are particularly tasty roasted or grilled, they say. Purple

Peruvian fingerlings are a striking and delicious way to dress up a potato salad, while Yukon Golds are great mashers.

Growing potatoes without herbicides or pesticides is hard work: Managing weeds through cultivation is time-consuming, avoiding blight means planting earlier than usual and rotating crops more often, and constant vigilance is required to keep potato beetles at bay. So why go through the hardship? "Putting toxins in the land scares the hell out of me," says John Janiszewski. "It's worth the extra work."

—Amy Albert, senior editor



Clockwise from bottom left: Purple Peruvians, Austrian Crescents, Yukon Golds, and French fingerlings.

Thanksgiving On the Side

COMPILED BY JOANNE McALLISTER SMART

Of course there will be turkey at your Thanksgiving table—the fun part is figuring out what else to serve. If you want to make this year's Thanksgiving dinner just a little bit different, add a new side dish to your menu. Choose from among these fifteen recipes, including colorful green beans and full-flavored gratins that you can make ahead or ask someone to bring. Mix and match the recipes yourself or look to the menus below for inspiration.



Give your side dishes a regional spin

Traditional

Classic Bread Dressing
Cranberry-Citrus Compote
Pearl Onion Gratin
Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes (hold the horseradish)
Green Beans with Toasted Slivered Almonds

Italian

Italian Bread & Sausage Dressing
Cranberry-Citrus Compote
Mashed Potatoes with Olive Oil & Parsley
Butternut Squash Gratin with Onion & Sage
Long-Cooked Green Beans with Oregano

New American

Cornbread Pecan Dressing
Cranberry-Pear Salsa
Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes (with Horseradish)
Sweet Potato & Leek Gratin
Green Beans with Toasted Slivered Almonds

New Southern

Cornbread Pecan Dressing
Cranberry-Orange Relish with Ginger
Molasses Mashed Sweet Potatoes
Pearl Onion Gratin with Parmesan, Savory & Thyme
Orange-Dijon Green Beans



Mashed Potatoes

Be sure to whip potatoes only until smooth, and never use a food processor to mash them—they'll get gummy.

Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes with Horseradish

Serves ten to twelve.

4 lb. Yukon Gold potatoes
2 Tbs. kosher salt
12 Tbs. unsalted butter
1¼ cups light cream
Ground white pepper to taste
½ cup prepared horseradish

Peel and quarter the potatoes and put them in a large pot. Cover with cold water and add 1 Tbs. salt. Bring to boil, reduce to a gentle boil, and cook until easily pierced with a fork, about 20 minutes. Drain the potatoes.

In an electric stand mixer with the whisk attachment or with an electric hand mixer, whip the potatoes until smooth, about 1 minute; add the butter and mix until melted and combined, about 30 seconds. Add the cream, 1 Tbs. salt, and white pepper to taste. Starting on low and gradually increasing the speed to prevent splattering, whip until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl frequently. Alternatively, use a food mill to purée the potatoes and then beat in the remaining ingredients by hand. Fold in the horseradish and combine well.

—*Michael Brisson,*
Fine Cooking #29

Mashed Potatoes with Olive Oil & Parsley

Serves eight.

4 lb. Yukon Gold potatoes,
peeled and cut into 2-inch
cubes
2 Tbs. kosher salt; more for
seasoning
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper
to taste
½ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf
parsley

Put a large pot of cold water on high heat. Add the potatoes and 2 Tbs. salt and bring to a boil. Boil just until a skewer or knife can easily penetrate the center of the potatoes, 20 to 30 minutes.

When the potatoes are done, draw off about 1 cup of the cooking liquid; set aside. Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot in which they were cooked. Mash them with a potato masher. With a wooden spoon, stir in the olive oil. Add some of the



reserved cooking liquid until you reach the consistency you like. Season generously with salt and several grinds of black pepper.

Just before serving, check the consistency of the potatoes and add a little more of the reserved cooking liquid if they need loosening. Mix in the parsley. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

—*Josh Eisen,*
Fine Cooking #25



Molasses Mashed Sweet Potatoes

Serves eight.

4 medium sweet potatoes
(2 lb. total), peeled and cut
into 1-inch chunks
8 small carrots (1 lb. total),
peeled and cut into 1-inch
chunks
4 medium parsnips (1 lb. total),
peeled and cut into 1-inch
chunks
Kosher salt
4 Tbs. unsalted butter
¼ cup sour cream
¼ cup molasses
1 Tbs. finely grated fresh ginger
½ cup half-and-half
Freshly ground black pepper

In a large saucepan, combine the sweet potatoes, carrots, and parsnips; cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, add 1 Tbs. salt, and simmer until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain and return to the saucepan. Set the pan over low heat, uncovered, and let the vegetables dry in the pan for about 2 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally so they don't stick. Pass the vegetables through a food mill or mash them by hand, if you prefer. Stir in the butter, sour cream, molasses, grated ginger, and half-and-half (if you're preparing the potatoes ahead, save 2 Tbs. of the half-and-half for reheating). Add ½ tsp. salt and pepper to taste, adjust the seasonings, and serve.

—*Karen & Ben Barker,*
Fine Cooking #47



Classic Bread Dressing

Serves ten to twelve.

- 1-lb. loaf good-quality white bread or baguette, cut into ½-inch cubes (10 to 12 cups)**
- 8 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 3 cups ¼-inch diced onion**
- 2 cups chopped celery (including inner leaves)**
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped**
- 1½ Tbs. chopped fresh sage (or 1½ tsp. dried)**
- 1½ Tbs. chopped fresh thyme (or 1½ tsp. dried)**
- 1 tsp. celery seeds**
- Pinch grated nutmeg**
- Pinch ground cloves**
- 1 tsp. kosher salt**
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 cups homemade or low-salt chicken broth**

Put the bread cubes on a rimmed baking sheet and either leave them on the counter to dry overnight or bake in a 275°F oven, tossing occasionally, until dry but not golden, 30 to 35 minutes. In a 12-inch skillet over medium heat, melt half the butter. Add the onion, celery, garlic, sage, thyme, celery seeds, nutmeg, cloves, and salt. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft, about 10 minutes. Set aside to let cool.

Heat the oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, toss the sautéed vegetables with the bread; season with pepper. Melt the remaining butter. Brush the inside of a 3-qt. baking dish with some of the butter. Pour the remaining butter, along with the broth, over the dressing; toss well. Spread in the baking dish and cover with foil. Bake until heated through, 20 minutes. Uncover and continue to bake until the top is crisp and golden, 20 to 30 minutes.

—Molly Stevens,
Fine Cooking #24

Cornbread Pecan Dressing

Serves ten to twelve.

- 4 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 5 slices bacon, cut crosswise into ¾-inch pieces**
- 1½ cups chopped onion**
- 1½ cups chopped celery (including inner leaves)**
- ½ cup finely chopped shallots**
- 1 Tbs. dried sage leaves**
- 2 tsp. dried thyme**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste**
- 3 cups (10 oz.) pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped**
- 2 lb. cornbread, coarsely crumbled (to yield about 6 cups lightly packed)**
- 1½ cups homemade or low-salt chicken broth**
- 3 large eggs, beaten**

Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish. Melt the butter in a 10-inch sauté pan over medium heat. Add the bacon and brown slowly until crisp, 8 to 10 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to paper towels to drain; leave the fat and caramelized bits in the skillet. Add the onion, celery, shallots, sage, and thyme; sprinkle with salt and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until the vegetables are just tender,



10 to 15 minutes. In a large bowl, toss the vegetables, pecans, bacon, and cornbread. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Whisk together the broth and eggs; stir into the dressing and mix until well combined. Spread the mixture in the baking dish, cover tightly with foil, and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover and continue to bake until the top is lightly browned and crisp, another 20 to 25 minutes.

—Scott Peacock,
Fine Cooking #18

Italian Bread & Sausage Dressing

Serves eight to twelve.

- 1¼ lb. slightly stale Italian bread, like ciabatta, cut into ½- to ¾-inch cubes (to yield about 12 cups)**
- ⅓ cup olive oil**
- 1 lb. bulk sweet Italian sausage (or stuffed sausage, casings removed)**
- 2 cups ¼-inch diced yellow onions**
- 1 cup ¼-inch diced celery**
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- 2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves (or 1½ tsp. dried)**
- 1½ tsp. dried sage leaves**
- 1 tsp. kosher salt**
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 cup sweet Marsala wine**

Heat the oven to 350°F. Oil a 9x13-inch (3-qt.) baking dish. Pile the bread cubes into a very large bowl and set aside. Set a 10-inch sauté pan over medium heat and add the olive oil and sausage. Cook, breaking up the sausage with a wooden spoon or spatula into ½- to 1-inch bits, until browned on all sides, 5 to 7 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the sausage to the bowl of cubed bread. Raise the heat under the pan to medium high, add the onions, celery, and garlic, and sauté until the onions are translucent and just beginning to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in the thyme, sage, salt, and pepper, cook for 1 minute, and then add the mixture to the cubed bread.

With the pan off the heat, carefully pour in the Marsala. Keep your face away from the pan as the wine may sputter. Set the pan over medium-high heat and bring the liquid to a boil, stirring to scrape up any flavorful bits in the pan. Boil for 2 minutes and then add the Marsala to the bread mixture; stir until well combined. Taste and add salt and pepper if needed. Spread the mixture in the baking dish, cover tightly with foil, and bake for 20 minutes. Remove the foil and continue to bake until the top is lightly browned and crisped, about 15 minutes.

—Greg Atkinson,
Fine Cooking #35

Dressings



Slightly stale bread is ideal for dressing, so leave bread on the counter overnight or bake cubes in a low oven until dry and golden.

For added color, substitute yellow wax beans for some of the green beans.



Green Beans

Green Beans with Toasted Slivered Almonds

Serves eight.

6 Tbs. unsalted butter
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup slivered almonds
1 lb. fresh green beans, trimmed
4 tsp. minced garlic (2 to 3 cloves)
1 tsp. kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Melt 4 Tbs. of the butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the almonds and cook, tossing frequently, until they're light brown and toasted, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer them with a slotted spoon to a plate lined with paper towels.

Add the green beans, garlic, and salt to the pan. Toss to coat the beans with the residual butter. Add 1 cup water and simmer gently, tossing occasionally, until the beans are fork-tender and fully cooked (taste one to check), 15 to 20 minutes. If the water evaporates before the beans are cooked, add more as needed, about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time. By the time the beans are cooked, the liquid should be reduced to about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup or less; if there's too much liquid, increase the heat to a boil and let it reduce briefly. Add the remaining 2 Tbs. butter and toss to coat the beans and emulsify with the liquid. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Scatter the slivered almonds over beans on a serving platter or over each serving.

—Eve Felder,
Fine Cooking #53



Long-Cooked Green Beans with Oregano

Serves six to eight.

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
6 cloves garlic, chopped coarsely
Leaves from 6 large sprigs fresh oregano (scant $\frac{1}{4}$ cup)
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb. (preferably mature) green beans, trimmed
2 tsp. kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-based pot (like an 8-qt. Dutch oven) over medium heat. Add the garlic and oregano and cook, stirring, until fragrant and the garlic is softened but not browned, about 2 minutes. Put the beans in the pot, add the salt, and grind a little pepper over all. Add the lemon juice and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water and bring to a boil. Immediately reduce to a simmer, cover the pot, and cook the beans for 20 minutes. Remove the cover and simmer the beans gently over medium-high heat until nearly all the liquid in the pot has evaporated, about 30 minutes. During this time, occasionally turn the beans over upon themselves with tongs to mix them and coat them with the reducing juices. Let cool briefly before serving.

—Paul Bertolli,
Fine Cooking #17



Orange-Dijon Green Beans

Serves eight.

$1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. fresh green beans, trimmed and cut or snapped in half crosswise (not lengthwise)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh orange juice (from about 1 small orange)
2 Tbs. Dijon mustard
2 tsp. light brown sugar
4 Tbs. unsalted butter
1 medium red onion (8 to 10 oz.), very thinly sliced
1 tsp. lightly chopped fresh thyme
1 tsp. kosher salt; more to taste
Freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add the beans and cook until crisp-tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Drain in a colander, rinse with cold water to stop the cooking, and drain well. (This step may be done several hours ahead; refrigerate the beans if not using within 2 hours.)

In a small measuring cup, whisk together the orange juice, mustard, and brown sugar. In a 10- to 12-inch nonstick skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the red onion and toss to coat. Turn the heat to medium high and sauté, stirring often, until the onions are very shrunken and many are browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the beans, thyme, salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Add the mustard mixture, immediately turn the heat to medium low (the sauce will begin to thicken), and stir vigorously (or use tongs) to toss and combine the beans with the sauce. Continue cooking to heat the beans through and to thoroughly coat them, 1 to 2 minutes. Season to taste with more salt and pepper.

—Susie Middleton,
Fine Cooking #45

Gratins



Butternut Squash Gratin with Onion & Sage

Serves four to six.

To make butternut squash easier to handle, cut off the neck, peel it, and cut it into pieces to use in this gratin. Reserve the bottom of the squash, which contains the seed cavity, for roasting.

- 1 Tbs. olive oil**
- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 4 cups 1-inch diced yellow onions**
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh sage (or 1 Tbs. dried)**
- 3 lb. butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into ½-inch cubes (about 7 to 8 cups)**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ½ cup plus 2 Tbs. heavy cream, heated until warm**
- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs**
- 1½ Tbs. melted unsalted butter**

Heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly butter a shallow 8x11-inch gratin dish.

In a 12-inch skillet, heat the 1 Tbs. butter and oil over medium-low heat. Add the onions and sage, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, while you prepare the squash.

Put the squash in a steaming basket and set over simmering water. Cover and let steam until the squash is tender, about 10 minutes. Put the squash in the prepared dish with the garlic and ¾ tsp. salt. Toss gently to combine.

Continue to cook the onions, stirring frequently once they begin to color, until they're very soft and brown, 30 to 45 minutes total. Season with salt and pepper and add them to the gratin dish, mixing them with the squash. Pour the warm cream over the vegetables. Toss the breadcrumbs with the 1½ Tbs. melted butter and a large pinch of salt; sprinkle the crumbs evenly over the gratin. Bake until the top is lightly browned and the cream is bubbling, about 40 minutes.

—*Deborah Madison,*
Fine Cooking #17

Pearl Onion Gratin with Parmesan, Savory & Thyme

Serves eight.

- 2 lb. frozen pearl onions, thawed**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 3 4-inch sprigs fresh thyme**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 3 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted**
- 1 cup coarse fresh breadcrumbs**
- ¼ cup freshly, finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano**
- ½ tsp. dried savory leaves, crumbled**

Heat the oven to 400°F. Put the onions and ¾ cup water in a large saucepan over high heat. Stir and separate the onions with a fork as they heat. When the water boils, reduce the heat to medium, cover, and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain well and pat dry.

Combine the cream, thyme, and ½ tsp. salt in a small saucepan over medium-high heat.

When the cream comes to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, brush a shallow 2-qt. gratin or baking dish with 1 Tbs. of the butter. In a small bowl, toss the breadcrumbs, Parmigiano, savory, the remaining 2 Tbs. melted butter, ½ tsp. salt, and several grinds of pepper.

Spread the onions in the baking dish. Pick out and discard



the thyme sprigs from the cream. Pour the cream over the onions and scatter the breadcrumbs on top. Bake until the breadcrumbs are deep golden brown and the cream is bubbling furiously around the edges, about 30 minutes. Let rest for 10 minutes before serving.

—*Jennifer Armentrout,*
test kitchen manager



Sweet Potato & Leek Gratin

Serves six.

- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 2 Tbs. olive oil**
- 6 oz. pancetta, cut in ¼-inch dice**
- 2 large leeks (1 lb. total), trimmed, halved lengthwise, rinsed well, and sliced crosswise ¼ inch thick**
- ¼ cup minced garlic**
- 2 cups heavy cream**
- 3 Tbs. fresh thyme leaves**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 medium sweet potatoes (1 lb. total), peeled**
- 3 medium russet potatoes (1¼ lb. total), peeled**

In a medium saucepan, heat the butter and oil over medium heat. Add the pancetta and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 9 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to paper towels. Put the leeks and garlic in the pan, cover, turn the heat to low, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the leeks are softened but not browned, about 5 minutes. Add the cream, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer uncovered for 5 minutes. Stir in the pancetta, thyme, 1 tsp. salt, and pepper to taste; set aside.

Heat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 2-qt. casserole dish. Slice the sweet potatoes and russet potatoes ⅛ to ¼ inch thick. Arrange one overlapping layer of russets on the bottom of the casserole. Season lightly with salt and pepper; spoon 2 Tbs. of the leek cream evenly over the potatoes. Add a layer of sweet potatoes, season lightly, and spoon on another 2 Tbs. of the leek cream. Repeat with the remaining potatoes until all are used. Press firmly on the potatoes; drizzle the remaining leek cream over them. Bake until the top is golden and the potatoes in the center feel tender when pierced with a fork, 50 to 60 minutes. Let rest in a warm place for 15 minutes before serving.

—*Karen & Ben Barker,*
Fine Cooking #47

When preparing gratins, cut your vegetables uniformly to ensure that they cook evenly.



Cranberry-Pear Salsa

Yields 3 cups.

12 oz. fresh cranberries, picked over and stemmed
1½ cups peeled, cored, and coarsely chopped pears (about 2 medium or 1 large pear)
½ cup diced green bell pepper
¼ cup honey
½ cup granulated sugar
1 fresh serrano chile, cored, seeded, and minced
1 tsp. finely grated orange zest
2 Tbs. fresh orange juice
1 Tbs. canola oil
Pinch salt

Coarsely chop the cranberries (or pulse them in a food processor until coarsely chopped). Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl and toss gently. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

—*Abigail Johnson Dodge, Fine Cooking #18*

Cranberry-Orange Relish with Ginger

Yields 3 cups.

12 oz. fresh cranberries, picked over and stemmed
1 small navel orange, including the peel, cut into eighths
Generous ⅓ cup roughly chopped crystallized ginger
1 Tbs. granulated sugar
¼ tsp. kosher salt

In a food processor, combine the cranberries, orange, crystallized ginger, sugar, and salt. Process until coarsely ground, stopping once or twice to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Transfer to a serving bowl, cover, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

—*Diane Morgan, Fine Cooking #53*



Cranberry Citrus Compote

Yields 5 cups.

24 oz. fresh cranberries, picked over and stemmed
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
Finely grated zest of 1 orange
2 shallots, finely chopped (about ¼ cup)
2 cups granulated sugar
½ cup orange juice
½ cup thinly sliced scallions (3 large)

Up to one week ahead: Heat the oven to 350°F. Combine the cranberries, lemon zest, orange zest, shallots, and sugar in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Turn into a 3-qt. glass baking dish and drizzle the orange juice over the cranberry mixture. Bake, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved and a few berries have popped open, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, let cool thoroughly (the pectin in the excess liquid will firm up when cool), cover, and refrigerate.

On the day of serving: Remove the compote from the refrigerator early in the day to bring it to room temperature. Fold in the sliced scallions and scrape into a serving bowl.

—*Michael Brisson, Fine Cooking #29*



Before using cranberries, pick them over for stems and shriveled berries. Any stray white cranberries are fine to leave in—they're sweeter than red ones.

Cranberry Sauces

Getting a jump on things

To save stove space as well as your sanity, make some dishes ahead

Bake the gratins a day or two ahead and reheat them, combine the dressing ingredients a day before baking, and make and chill the cranberry sauce a few days ahead and bring it to room temperature before serving. To keep mashed potatoes warm, put an inch of water

in the pot the potatoes were cooked in and set it over low heat. Put the potatoes in a metal mixing bowl, cover with foil, and put the bowl on top of the pot. You can hold the potatoes like this for at least 2 hours; just maintain the water level and keep the heat low.

BY PAM ANDERSON

Bridging summer & autumn

These recipes offer the best of summer and fall. A light, Greek-style shrimp salad and a dish of spiced drumsticks with zesty avocado and tomato salad satisfy in the warmer months, while heartier fare like ravioli stuffed with butternut squash and a sausage hash with potatoes and apples whet your appetite for fall. Whatever the weather, these recipes are quick to prepare, so they work for a family meal or a casual supper with friends.



Greek-Style Shrimp Salad

Serves four.

- 1 lb. large (31-40 count) shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- 5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 heaping cup seeded and medium-diced plum tomatoes**
- 2½ oz. (½ cup) crumbled feta cheese**
- ¼ cup pitted and coarsely chopped Kalamata or other black olives**
- 1 Tbs. drained and rinsed capers (coarsely chopped if large)**
- 1 tsp. dried oregano**
- 4 tsp. red-wine vinegar**
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice**
- 7 oz. (8 to 9 cups lightly packed) baby greens, washed and spun dry**

Position an oven rack on the highest rung (4 inches from the element) and heat the broiler to high. Pat the shrimp completely dry with paper towels. In a medium bowl, toss the shrimp with 1 Tbs. of the oil, ¼ tsp. salt, and several grinds of pep-

per. Arrange the shrimp in a single layer on a foil-covered rimmed baking sheet. Broil the shrimp until they're pink on the outside and opaque in the center, 3 to 4 minutes.

Mix the tomatoes, feta, olives, capers, oregano, 2 Tbs. of the olive oil, 2 tsp. of the vinegar, and 1 tsp. of the lemon juice in a medium bowl. Add the shrimp; toss lightly to combine.

In a small bowl, use a fork to whisk together the remaining 2 Tbs. oil, 2 tsp. vinegar, and 1 tsp. lemon juice. Toss the greens in a large bowl with the vinaigrette. Season generously with salt and pepper and toss again. Divide the greens among four large plates. Top each portion of greens with equal amounts of the shrimp mixture and serve.



Broiled Tex-Mex Drumsticks with Avocado & Tomato Salad

Serves four.

- 8 chicken drumsticks (about 2¼ lb. total)**
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 tsp. ground cumin**
- 2 tsp. chili powder**
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ¾ cup quartered grape or cherry tomatoes**
- 1 medium avocado, cut into medium dice**
- ¼ cup finely diced red onion**
- 2 Tbs. minced fresh cilantro**
- 2 Tbs. fresh lime juice**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the broiler to high. Put the drumsticks in a medium bowl. Drizzle them with the olive oil and toss to coat. Sprinkle in the cumin, chili powder, sugar, ½ tsp. salt,

and a few grinds of pepper; toss again to coat evenly. Arrange the drumsticks on a wire rack set over a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Broil the chicken in the center of the oven, turning once after 10 minutes, until fully cooked and browned in spots, about 20 minutes total.

While the chicken cooks, gently mix the tomatoes, avocado, onion, cilantro, lime juice, and 1 tsp. salt in a mixing or serving bowl. Serve alongside the chicken.

Serving suggestion:

Serve with black beans and rice or tortilla chips.



Spiced Lamb Pitats with Fresh Mango Salsa

Serves four.

- 1½ tsp. ground cumin**
- 1½ tsp. ground ginger**
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 1½ lb. ground lamb**
- 1 large red onion, cut into small dice**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ½ cup plus 2 Tbs. Major Grey style mango chutney**
- 1 ripe medium mango, cut into ¼-inch dice**
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro**
- 4 large pita breads, cut in half to yield 8 half-moon pockets**
- 2 tsp. fresh lime juice; more to taste**

Heat the oven to 450°F. Mix the cumin, ginger, and cinnamon in a small bowl. Reserve ¼ tsp. of the spice mix in a large bowl. In another large bowl, sprinkle the remaining spices over the lamb and mix with a fork to combine.

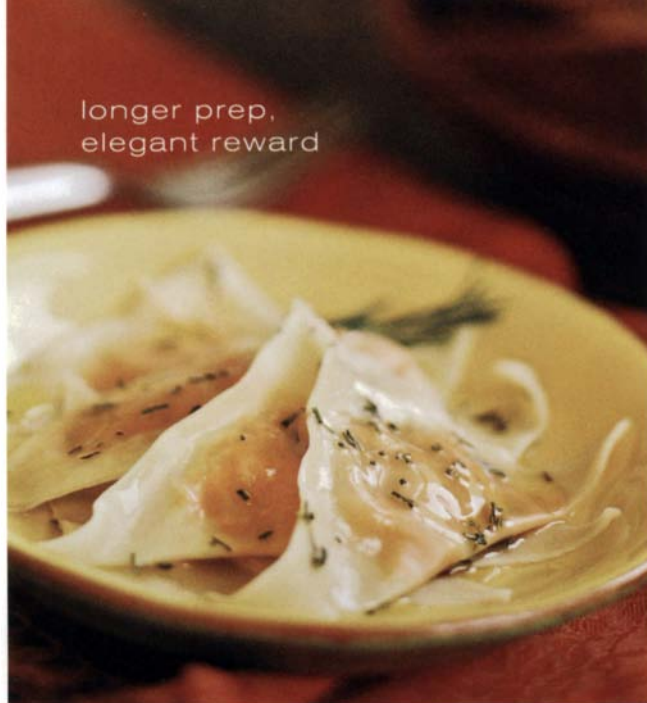
Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the lamb and all but ⅓ cup of the onion. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring and breaking up the meat with the side of a spoon, until the lamb is fully cooked and all of the liquid has evaporated from the pan, about 9 minutes. Stir in ½ cup of the chutney and continue to cook for 1 minute.

Remove from the heat and keep warm.

Lightly toast the pita breads on a baking sheet in the oven, 6 to 8 minutes, flipping once. Meanwhile, add the remaining ⅓ cup onion and 2 Tbs. chutney, the mango, cilantro, lime juice, and a pinch of salt to the reserved spices to make a salsa; stir to combine. Taste and add more lime juice if it seems sweet (it should be somewhat tangy to offset the sweetness of the meat).

To serve, let diners assemble their own sandwiches by filling the halved pitas with the lamb and salsa.

Note: This recipe also works as an hors d'oeuvre. Cut the pitas into triangles and toss with 4 to 5 Tbs. olive oil and kosher salt. Toast on a baking sheet in a 450°F oven, flipping after 5 minutes, until crisped and slightly browned, 7 minutes total. Top each triangle with some of the lamb mixture and a bit of the salsa.



Butternut Squash Ravioli with Rosemary Oil

Serves six.

½ lb. butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into ½-inch dice (1½ cups)
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 clove garlic, minced
1½ tsp. minced fresh rosemary
¼ cup heavy cream
¼ cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano; more for serving
36 square or round wonton wrappers

Put the squash, $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water, 1 Tbs. of the oil, and a scant $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt in a large, deep sauté pan. Turn the heat to high until the water simmers; cover and steam the squash until it's just tender and the water has just evaporated, 5 to 6 minutes; check often. Stir in the garlic and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. of the rosemary; sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute. Transfer to a food processor and add the cream, Parmigiano, and a few grinds pepper. Process, scraping the bowl as needed, until the mixture is mostly smooth.

While the squash cools slightly, wash the sauté pan and fill it with 2 qt. water and 1 Tbs. salt; bring to a simmer over medium-high heat.

With a large wire rack and a small bowl of water close by, lay six wonton wrappers on a clean, dry countertop. Drop a rounded 1 tsp. of the filling in the center of each wrapper. Brush the edges of each wrapper with a little water. Fold each wrapper to create a triangle or half moon, pushing out any air bubbles and pressing the edges to seal completely. Transfer the ravioli to the wire rack; repeat the process with the remaining wonton wrappers and filling, making sure the countertop is dry after each batch.

Heat the remaining 3 Tbs. oil and 1 tsp. rosemary in a small skillet or saucepan over medium heat. When the rosemary starts to sizzle, take the pan off the heat.

Drop half of the ravioli into the simmering water. Cook until the wrapper over the filling starts to wrinkle and the ravioli turn translucent, 3 to 4 minutes. With a large slotted spoon, transfer six ravioli to each of three pasta plates. Repeat to cook the remaining ravioli. Drizzle each portion of the ravioli with 2 tsp. of the pasta cooking water and 1 tsp. of the rosemary oil, sprinkle with a little Parmigiano, and serve immediately.



Lemon Chicken Soup with Spinach & Dill

Serves four to six.

2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1 large yellow onion, cut into medium dice
1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
1 qt. low-salt chicken broth
½ cup instant rice
1 tsp. dried oregano
5 oz. (6 cups lightly packed) baby spinach
2 Tbs. minced fresh dill
2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice; more to taste
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat the oil in a small (3-qt.) Dutch oven or soup kettle over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the chicken thighs, broth, rice, and oregano. Cover, raise the heat to medium high, and

bring to a full boil; turn off the heat and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. With tongs, transfer the chicken to a cutting board and shred it with a table knife and fork, discarding any obvious fat or gristle. Working in two batches, purée the broth, rice, and onions in a blender until very smooth, 30 to 60 seconds.

Return the chicken and the thickened broth to the pot and bring to a simmer over medium-low heat. Add the spinach and dill; cook until the spinach wilts completely, about 3 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and more lemon juice.



Sausage, Potato & Apple Sauté

Serves four.

- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 large yellow onion, cut into medium dice (about 2 cups)**
- 1 lb. sweet Italian sausage (bulk sausage or links with casings removed)**
- 1½ lb. russet potatoes**
- 1 large apple**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 Tbs. tomato ketchup**
- 1 Tbs. Dijon mustard**
- ½ tsp. dried thyme leaves**
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**

Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil over medium-high heat in an 11- to 12-inch nonstick skillet. When the oil is hot, add the onion and sausage and cook, stirring and breaking up the sausage with the side of a wooden spoon, until the sausage is golden brown and broken into small (½-inch) pieces, 8 to 10 minutes. While the sausage and onion cook, peel and cut the potatoes

and apple into ½-inch dice. Scrape the cooked sausage and onions into a colander to drain briefly before transferring to a medium bowl. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil and then the potatoes and apple to the skillet; season with 1 tsp. salt and several grinds pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until the potatoes and apple are golden brown and the potatoes are tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Meanwhile, mix the ketchup, mustard, thyme, parsley, and 2 Tbs. water in a small bowl. Return the sausage and onions to the skillet and stir in the ketchup mixture. Cook, stirring frequently, until the hash has browned nicely, about another 5 minutes. Season to taste with more salt and pepper before serving.



Pan-Fried Scallops with Malt Vinegar Dipping Sauce

Serves four as a main course or six as an hors d'oeuvre.

- 1 large egg**
- ½ cup (2 oz.) plain dry breadcrumbs**
- 1¼ lb. "dry" sea scallops (muscle tabs removed if necessary)**
- ¼ cup malt vinegar**
- 2 tsp. Old Bay seasoning**
- 2 cups neutral oil, such as canola, vegetable, or peanut oil**

Beat the egg in a shallow dish; put the breadcrumbs in another shallow dish. Working with one scallop at a time, dip it in the beaten egg and then dredge it in the breadcrumbs; set each breaded scallop on a plate or tray as you finish it.

Mix the vinegar and Old Bay in a small dish.

Pour the oil into a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan (cast-

iron or nonstick works well) over medium-high heat. Heat until the oil begins to shimmer and ripple and bubbles instantly when the edge of a scallop is dipped into it. Fry the scallops in two batches, turning once with tongs, until golden brown on both sides, about 2 minutes per side. Adjust the heat as necessary to keep the oil hot but not smoking.

Transfer the scallops to paper towels to drain. Serve immediately with the seasoned malt vinegar.

Serving suggestion:

Serve with roasted or fried potatoes, or serve over greens.